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Council is to look at buying up housing

COUNCIL bosses in Dudley are considering buying private homes from developers to plug an urgent gap in housing to families desperate to downsize, due in part to the 'bedroom tax'.

They revealed there was a 'mismatch' in their housing stock which was causing problems when trying to allocate homes. Officials claim the policy has created an 'excessive demand' for smaller properties.

Developers

Dudley Council's housing boss, Councillor Steve Waltho, said they were now considering buying empty new properties that housing developers were struggling to sell.

"Maybe there are houses that the council can purchase from developers that have been left over and they have not yet sold," he said.

Figures reveal a total of 2,704 households have been affected by the bedroom tax.

The council says support has been provided for tenants in arrears including extra home visits and debt advice. Between April and September, 166 tenants downsized their properties compared with 74 during the same period last year.

Rent arrears are soaring

THE 'bedroom tax' and other welfare reforms have been blamed as rent arrears in Dudley have soared to their highest level in five years.

The number of Dudley Council tenants falling behind on their rent has increased by 17 per cent in a year, councillors were told.

Members of the authority's Adult, Community and Housing Services Scrutiny Committee heard that 9,601 tenants were in arrears in September compared to 8,153 at the same time last year, adding up to almost £372,000 of debt. The committee was told it was due to the impact of reforms such as the 'bedroom tax' and the introduction of a benefit cap.

■ More in arrears - page 5

SEWAGE ORDEAL FOR WIDOW, 78

Report by Alex Ross

A PENSIONER says she is 'living a nightmare' after returning home from hospital to find sewage in her garden - more than a year after first alerting a water company

Sewage began seeping into Patricia Poles' bungalow garden in Halesowen following a thunderstorm in May last year. The 78-year-old widow contacted Severn Trent Water, but the company was unable to solve the problem, instead taking action to regularly empty an over-spilling inspection chamber behind her garden.

Three months later, after Mrs Poles demanded the company stop the disturbance caused by the tanker visits, the firm cleared a storage tank in Coombs Road - and the sewage went away.

However, when Mrs Poles recently returned from a three-week stay in hospital for a chest condition she found sewage had reappeared in her garden.

Apologised

Severn Trent Water has apologised and pledged to find a long-term solution.

Mrs Poles said: "I came back and everyone said there was a smell in the garden, I got my son to look and he could see the sewage everywhere. The company came back out and cleaned up the garden but I'm just waiting for the whole problem to return. The company needs to find a long-term solution to finally solve the issue."

Great-grandmother Mrs Poles said the tank was on land behind her garden. She bought the bungalow nine years ago after a move from Romsley following the death of her husband Clifford.

She said: "When the problem first came I called Severn Trent Water and expected it fixed. But they just kept coming back. It got to the point where I refused to let them in, then they seemed to sort it."

"Now we are back at square one and I'm living a nightmare."

Severn Trent Water spokeswoman Sarah-Jayne O'Kane apologised saying the problem was due to a sewer pipe collapse at the rear of the properties at Coombs Road.

"We have done a lot of investigation over the last few months to work out exactly where the collapse is," she said.

"Unfortunately, the point of the collapse is almost inaccessible and an extremely tricky place to work in. Tankers are taking the sewage away from Coombs Road to further prevent anything from reaching the property in Badgers Croft."

She said the company was working on a permanent solution.



Patricia Poles, 78

Blind centre charity faces funding crisis

A CHARITY that helps blind and partially-sighted people across the Black Country is trying to plug a funding black hole due to a drop in donations.

The Beacon Centre for the Blind spent £233,068 more than it received over the past year. Chief executive Arwyn Jones said the charity was on course to deliver a balanced budget next year but was trying to raise more through donations and legacies.

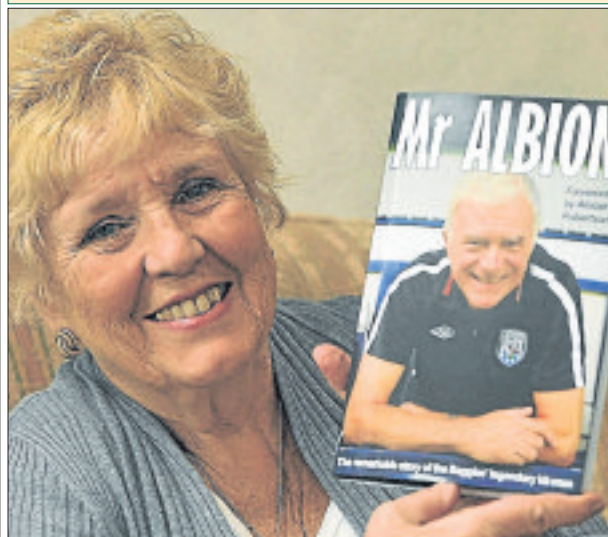
He revealed the Sedgley-based charity had cut nine jobs last year - almost a tenth of its workforce - to reduce costs. It closed a loss-making talking newspaper and reduced opening hours by half an hour.

The charity helps 2,588 blind and partially sighted but it may face further challenges if cash-strapped councils such as Dudley and Wolverhampton reduce their funding. The charity gets 40 per cent of its income through council grants.

Other forms of fundraising income from donations, gifts, events and activities dropped last year to £198,780 from £245,988 the year before. The charity made £2,180,776 but spent £2,413,844.

Mr Jones said: "In common with almost every charity, there has been a drop in personal donations. We are exceptionally grateful to everyone who does donate. We've seen an improvement in donations left to us in legacies. People are remembering us in their wills, in many cases because we have helped them or a relative."

Mr Albion's memories



Carol Matthews pictured with a copy of her late husband Dave's autobiography Mr Albion HE saw an FA Cup win, League Cup win, and witnessed the highs of promotions and lows of relegations as he gave decades of service to his beloved football club.

Former West Bromwich Albion's kitman Dave Matthews gave 61 years of his life to Albion, but died on April 14, aged 67, less than a year after he retired.

His dying wish was for his autobiography Mr Albion to be published, telling fans what was really like in the changing rooms at The Hawthorns down the years.

Dave had battled non-Hodgkin lymphoma and was in remission when then diagnosed with a rare heart condition.

He had been dubbed Mr Albion by members of Baggies squads past and present including many of the club greats. Cyril Regis and Brendon Batson, along with ex-striker Bob Taylor, John Wile, Alistair Robertson and Paul Raven were pallbearers at his funeral in May.

The book will be unveiled at a meeting of the West Bromwich Albion Supporters' Club at The Hawthorns tonight (Thursday).

Former club chaplain and close friend Ken Hipkiss hinted his career was 'the stuff legends and books are made of'.

Dave, from Hasbury, Halesowen, committed three quarters of his life to print with writer David Instone before his death. It left Carol and daughters Alison and Clare to decide whether they should publish.

"We thought it would be a lasting tribute to him if we could finish it," said Carol.

Daughter Alison, Mr Instone and Albion legend Ally Robertson will take questions and sign copies of the book at a meeting of West Bromwich Albion Supporters' Club at 8pm in the East Stand at The Hawthorns.

Santa will switch on Christmas light show

TRADERS in Halesowen are preparing for the annual Christmas light switch-on event this Saturday.

The Dudley Council event, organised with the Halesowen Chamber of Trade and The Cornbow Shopping Centre, starts from noon.

There will be live entertainment and music in Somers Square with a special appearance from Halesowen's very own Black Country Ukulele Players.

Funfair

Families can enjoy vintage organs that will be playing in the High Street as well as funfair rides for youngsters. The Christmas lights will be switched on at 4.45pm by the Mayor of Dudley, Councillor Alan Finch, and Father Christmas.

Meanwhile, Santa will be also visiting a fun-filled family Christmas lights event at Cradley Heath on Saturday.

The free event in the High Street will include more entertainers than ever before to celebrate the town's lights switch-on by Sandwell's deputy mayor Councillor Barbara Price.

This year the festivities will be held from 3pm to 8pm, promise fun for the whole family. There will be a funfair for the children and a Christmas market with charity stalls.

Society move to a new HQ

THE official opening of the new head office of the Dudley Building Society will take place on next Thursday, November 21.

Guests including the Mayor of Dudley, Councillor Alan Finch, will be attending a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the offices at Harbour Buildings, at The Waterfront, Brierley Hill at noon.

The opening of the new head office has created 10 jobs with 55 staff now based at the site. Many have moved from the old head office and branch in Stone Street, Dudley, which remains open to customers.

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Father hit by lorry as he fled hammer threat



Sartaj Aziz

A 26-YEAR-OLD father-of-two was killed when he ran into the path of a lorry while trying to escape a man armed with a hammer, a court heard.

Garret Fitzpatrick pleaded guilty to the manslaughter of Sartaj Aziz, of Prescott Road, Stourbridge. He died when hit by the lorry outside the Formula 1 Hand Car Wash in Thorns Road, Quarry Bank, on August 20.

Wolverhampton Crown Court was told the incident was not a racist attack. Fitzpatrick, 27, from Bank Street,

Brierley Hill, admitted the unlawful killing on a basis that was not read out in full to the court.

Hugh O'Brien Quinn, prosecuting, said: "It is accepted that the defendant had known Mr Aziz for over 12 months and that they were neither friends nor enemies.

"The defendant had attended the car wash intending to have a fist fight.

"He had a hammer when he ran from his vehicle to the vehicle in which Mr Aziz was seated.

"He was reportedly ranting and raving 'get out of the car or I will kill you'.

"This was an attack borne out of something that had happened earlier although there had not been a feud between them.

"The defendant turned up intent upon violence. Mr Aziz saw the hammer, believed he was about to be assaulted with the hammer, and ran in to the road."

Fitzpatrick was remanded in custody for reports until December 18 when he is due to be sentenced after the case has been outlined in full to the court.

Justice system revamp delayed

A PROPOSED shake-up of the court system will be delayed as justice chiefs need to run a second consultation following opposition from magistrates.

Bosses at Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service are trying to find ways to cope with workloads in the face of 'immense budgetary' and resource pressures.

It is proposed to overhaul the Black Country Local Justice Area, affecting magistrates courts across the area. The preferred option had been for all criminal casework at Dudley Magistrates Court to cease as it became a civil, family and tribunal centre instead.

Youth

It was also proposed for the magistrates court in Wolverhampton to do all trials and youth cases in the Black Country, and for Walsall and Sandwell to split the rest of the workload between them. That was one of three options put forward in a six-week consultation.

That plan prompted a 1,200-strong petition in opposition from campaigners led by Dudley North MP Ian Austin.

That consultation has now closed and HMCTS has revealed it will review its proposals and consult again. Chiefs insist the cost of running a second consultation will be 'minimal'.

It is anticipated there will be a delay in implementing any changes, which it was thought could come in as soon as January 1.

A second consultation is expected to take between six and 12 weeks.

Allegation over arrow

A MAN accused of threatening his then girlfriend's father with a bow and arrow has been committed to crown court.

Negh Hussain appeared before Sandwell Magistrates Court last Thursday.

The 45-year-old, of Lawrence Lane, Cradley Heath, is accused of possession of an offensive weapon and making threats to kill.

Hussain will next appear before Wolverhampton Crown Court in February, when he is due to enter a plea.

Boost for adoption as loving parents sought

A SIX-FIGURE cash grant will be used to speed up a borough's adoption system, fund new staff and help attract more adoptive parents.

Dudley Council has been awarded £521,220 to help reduce the wait for adoptive parents.

It comes as the council makes a plea for more people interested in adopting children to come forward.

The council has been given the cash by the Government, which wants to increase the number of adoptive parents that are recruited.

Skatepark project is receiving funding

A £150,000 skatepark planned for Stourbridge has moved a step closer after the scheme received a further £10,000 worth of funding.

Unit3sixty owner Gavin Pardoe is to lodge a planning application for the BMX and skateboarding park with Dudley Council this week.

The skatepark would be in a disused industrial unit Mill Race Lane and would be the biggest in the West Midlands.

Last week Mr Pardoe won £10,000 worth of funding from Dudley Council's community forums in Wollaston and Halesowen. It follows a £40,000 grant from Dudley Council.

Unit3sixty, a not-for-profit venture set up 18 months ago, has also agreed to borrow £75,000 from Charity Bank. Mr Pardoe also hopes to get another £75,000 from UnLtd, a support group for social entrepreneurs.

He said: "I've been flabbergasted by the amount of money we've been able to get - it just proves there is such a need and want for schemes like this in the Dudley borough."

Need

The cash will help to fund three temporary full-time administration assistants.

Cabinet member for human resources, legal and property, Gaye Partridge, said: "To help tackle the immediate need to find homes for children requiring adoption the Government has made available a one year adoption reform grant for 2013/14.

"Additional administrative support to fieldworkers, will increase their capacity enabling them to reduce timescales."

As part of National Adoption Week, which ran last week, the council with Adoption in the Black Country embarked on a new search for more adoptive parents, specifically for brother and sister siblings and children with dual heritage backgrounds.

Councillor Tim Crumpton, cabinet member for children's services and life-long learning for Dudley Council said: "We really need people who can offer a child or children a loving home and supportive family for life."

To find out more call adoption in the Black Country on 0800 073 0597 or visit the www.adoptionblackcountry.co.uk website.

Special bus deal for soldiers



Private Dave McKee, 28, who will get extra time off from driving buses as a reservist EX-SOLDIERS and service personnel will be given free bus travel to help them find a job outside the Army.

Bus company National Express West Midlands has also said it will let families travel for free to visit wounded soldiers at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham.

The scheme comes as the company pledged it would guarantee anyone leaving the armed forces an interview for a job, as well as 10 days extra holiday for any staff who are Army reservists.

A 'Welcome Home' ticket will give ex-service personnel a month's free bus travel

to find work outside the forces, plus a family version for those relocating from postings.

Dudley-based bus driver Dave McKee, 28, a reservist, returned this week from a tour of Afghanistan.

Private McKee, from Slough bridge Road, Halesowen, had been stationed at Camp Bastion with 159 Supply Regiment, the Royal Logistic Corps.

He said: "Free travel will really help soldiers when they are looking for work. The extra time off is also really great."

"We already organise our training around our days off but this will be a massive help."

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Man gets three year match ban

A MAN who tried to run on to the pitch at Molineux during a Wolves game, and was found in possession of cocaine, have been banned from attending football matches for three years.

Joshua Harvey, of Rowley Regis, jumped the barrier at the front of a stand when Leigh Griffiths put Wolves ahead in the Midlands derby against Coventry City at Molineux on October 19.

Wolverhampton Magistrates Court heard officers searched Harvey, of Powke Lane, Rowley Regis, after his arrest and discovered a small bag of cocaine.

Taste

Mrs Maggie Meakin, prosecuting, said: "The defendant claims he found a bag of white powder on the floor of a toilet and decided to stick his finger in and taste it. When he realised it was cocaine he made the decision to keep it."

Harvey, 28, claimed he was not a football fan and had only ever been to one game before in his life.

Harvey told officers he had got 'carried away' when Wolves scored. He said because he was not used to attending matches he was not aware it was illegal to run on to the area next to the pitch.

District Judge Mr Graham Wilkinson said: "Regarding the drug offence I cannot believe a man of your intelligence would be stupid enough to pick up a bag off the floor of a toilet and try its contents."

"I also refuse to accept the fact you did not know it was illegal to run on to the area near the pitch."

Harvey pleaded guilty to possession of a controlled drug and unlawfully going on to an area adjacent to the playing area.

He was banned from attending all regulated football matches for three years and ordered to pay a £300 fine, £85 court costs and a £20 statutory surcharge.

Space talk

AN ASTRONOMER will be leading a guided tour of the universe tonight (Thursday) in Wordsley.

Andrew Lound is Wordsley History Society's guest speaker with his presentation, entitled Beginning of Time, which uses images taken by the Hubble Space telescope.

The talk at 7.30pm at Wordsley Green Community Centre, Wordsley Green, is free to members, £2 for visitors.

Health team had to use pen and paper as computer crashed

COMPUTERS at the NHS non-emergency helpline 111 broke down for a whole weekend, forcing call handlers to take sensitive notes with pen and paper.

Staff have claimed the notes were disposed of in the bin, prompting fears that sensitive information may not have been handled properly during last month's incident.

However, NHS Direct bosses said they had investigated the concerns and records were disposed of properly.

It comes as people are being urged to dial 111 for advice and guidance to avoid the need

to go to accident and emergency, with hospitals increasingly under pressure. But the service, which is meant to bring out-of-hours GP services together with other non-emergency care, has been beset by problems. Patients have reported serious concerns and delays.

A whistleblower at NHS Direct at Waterfront Business Park in Dudley, who asked not to be named, revealed the computer system crashed twice over the weekend of October 12 and 13.

Anna Turner, for NHS Direct, said: "NHS

Direct's NHS 111 services experienced a system outage due to an issue outside of its control. Our priority in such circumstances is to ensure that patients remain safe and are able to access health services.

Competent

"As a result, our call centre staff were asked to use our agreed contingency process, which includes the use of paper copies."

"The information is later transposed into the electronic system."

"Full and comprehensive clinical assess-

ments of patients symptoms continued to be undertaken.

"We ensure that all staff working on our services are trained on induction and remain familiar and competent with working our contingency process, though some of our staff may have required some additional support to guide them."

She added: "The question about the disposal of records has been investigated internally and we are able to confirm that all records were disposed of in accordance with data protection procedures."

Jail for sex attacker who pounced on dog walker

MP lends a hand at crisis charity



Charity founder and project manager Anna Hartland with James Morris MP, who was visiting the charity in Cradley Heath

A BLACK Country MP helped to unload donations from collection vans and stock shelves when he volunteered for the day at a charity helping people in crisis.

James Morris, who represents Halesowen and Rowley Regis, was lending a hand at Loaves 'n' Fishes in Old Hill.

The faith-based charity collects furniture, bedding and clothing as well as other household goods which can be reused by people in need across Dudley and Sandwell.

Mr Morris was helping out at the charity's main storehouse on Waterfall Lane.

He said he was doing his 'small part in helping them to deliver their incredible service to local people in crisis'.

Vital

He added: "Those crises can be caused by a number of different things - from women leaving domestic violence refuges and moving into an unfurnished home, to people affected

by family breakdown - and it is vital that there are community organisations like Loaves 'n' Fishes."

Loaves 'n' Fishes has been running since 2005. CSV, the national volunteering and learning charity, has asked MPs to talk about the voluntary work they do. It is part of its annual Make a Difference - Get Inspired campaign, which enables people to find out about the range of volunteering opportunities available with organisations in their area.

A SEX fiend who attacked a 60-year-old woman as she walked her dog in broad daylight has been jailed for four years.

Marcus Basterfield pounced as his victim walked along a road just off one of the main routes through Halesowen at 8am on a Saturday, a judge heard at Wolverhampton Crown Court.

The 22-year-old grabbed hold of her after following the woman for a short distance.

Mr Hugh O'Brien Quinn, prosecuting, said: "She was walking her dog when she noticed that she was being followed by the defendant who said: 'Excuse me'."

As she turned Basterfield made lewd remarks and indecently exposed himself before grabbing her round the waist, the court heard.

Screaming

The pair struggled and the woman managed to break free shouting: 'Go away, leave me alone'."

The attacker apologised but then continued to follow her before striking again moments later.

"He grabbed her once more and assaulted her again," said Mr O'Brien Quinn. "She was screaming and this was heard by people living nearby, one of whom came out of his home and the defendant ran away."

The man who raised the alarm then helped two Community Support Officers seek the attacker.

Mr O'Brien Quinn said: "They drove round the area until they spotted the defendant who denied any involvement in the offence."

Basterfield, who has a previous conviction for assault, was picked out in an identity parade and linked to the crime through forensic checks that found the DNA of the victim on his hands.

Miss Sarah Buckingham,



Marcus Basterfield

defending, said: "He has absolutely no recollection of what happened and what he did but he admitted responsibility when confronted by the scientific and other evidence."

"His inability to offer an explanation may be the result of shame or perhaps the result of the alcohol and drugs he had consumed the night before. It was totally out of character."

"If he genuinely cannot remember anything of the incident - and there is nothing to suggest that is not the case - then he has taken a courageous step by pleading guilty."

Basterfield from Offmoor Road, Halesowen, admitted indecent exposure and three offences of sexual assault. He was jailed and put on the Sex Offenders Register for life by Judge John Warner, who told him: "Your victim has shown considerable fortitude but has suffered lasting effects. This was a persistent attack in the street and a very serious offence."

NEWS

in brief

Sign up for prize draw and alerts

THERE is time for tenants and residents to enter a free prize draw to win £100 worth of shopping vouchers in time for Christmas.

Anyone signing up for Dudley Council's free housing alert service by 4pm on November 30 will be entered.

Once registered for this free service, the council will automatically send information about upcoming local events. Sign up at www.dudley.gov.uk/housingalerts or telephone 01384 815168.

New coach ticket initiative backed

A BLACK Country MP has voiced his support for the launch of a partnership between National Express and The Post Office.

Coach tickets will be on sale at more than 11,000 Post Office branches nationwide, including branches in Dudley, Warley, Wolverhampton and Kidderminster.

Warley MP John Speller welcomed the partnership meaning National Express and Eurolines coach tickets can now be purchased at Post Office branches.

Boy is rescued from playhouse

A FOUR-YEAR-OLD boy had to be rescued by firefighters after getting his arm stuck in part of a wooden playhouse.

A crew were called to St James's Primary School in Wollaston to help the youngster at around 11am last Wednesday.

Firefighters from Stourbridge used a saw to cut away a section of the playhouse to free his arm. He was checked over by ambulance staff. Firefighter Chris Glover said: "He was very calm and very brave throughout."

Ball games on offer at centre

YOUNG people can play dodgeball and handball at new sessions which have started up at Portway Lifestyle Centre, Oldbury. Sessions cost £1 per person. Call Sandwell Leisure Trust on 0121 506 4980.

Wrens Nest walk

THERE will be a walk around the Wrens Nest Nature Reserve on Wednesday, November 20, including a fossil hunt. Places should be booked in advance on 01384 812785.

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RHODES

DAVID Suchet reveals that he perfected Hercule Poirot's mincing walk by clenching a coin between his buttocks. In future, Mr Suchet may have some difficulty persuading shopkeepers to accept his small change. You wouldn't want a warm one, would you?

□□□□□□□□

"IF ANYONE has been offered sheep in unusual circumstances or for very low prices, please contact the police." Appeal by Pc Adam Taylor after 160 sheep were rustled - near the Dorset village of Wool.

□□□□□□□□

USEFUL statistics for our time. There are 400,000 planning permissions in England and Wales granted for houses which have still not been built. There is no housing shortage, just a building shortage.

□□□□□□□□

THE fresh-faced Gareth Malone popped up on The Choir (BBC2) with a ginger beard. One TV critic demanded: "How come it was that reddish shade when the hair on his head is dark brown?" Simple. It's all in the genes. Some of us (and I write personally) are born into gingerish families, surrounded by carrot-topped siblings, but displaying not a single reddish hair of our own. We are the hidden gingers. One day, usually in our teens, we decide to grow a beard and discover the ginger line. It runs approximately at mid-ear level. Everything on the face above this line is brown, everything below is red. You look so daft you immediately shave it off. The next time you try to grow some stubble, probably at mid-life crisis time, your beard turns out depressingly grey, so you buy a Harley Davidson or a nice pair of leather trousers instead, while convincing yourself that your bizarre colouring is a sign of exciting forbears. It's a Viking thing, innit? Probably not.

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Woman froze to death

Wartime memories for Nell, aged 105



Ellen 'Nell' Brookes celebrates her 105th birthday with carers Mary Bustin and Leane Arnold at Camelot Rest Home. ELLEN Brookes has lived through two world wars and left school for her first job aged just 14. Surrounded by cards from friends and family as she celebrated her 105th birthday, the centenarian recalled the dark days of the Second World War as she reflected on tough times. Ellen's memory remains razor sharp and she remembers blackouts, strict rations and bombing raids. "It wasn't too good a time," she said. "I remember we would have to shut the curtains and let the lights go off. A bomb was dropped on a house a lane up from where I lived. Then there was the rations." Ellen, known as Nell, was born in Beet Street, Blackheath, and had nine brothers. She attended school in Blackheath before leaving at the age of 14 for her first job at TW Lench, Blackheath. She later worked alongside her husband David for his wood merchant company, in Duke Street in Rowley Regis. She also furnished caravans rented out in Rhyll, Weston-super-Mare and Barmouth. The couple married at Birmingham Road Chapel on October 15 in 1933. They lived in Yew Tree Lane in Blackheath and had three children, called Michael, Tony and Margaret.

A CARE home where an elderly dementia sufferer was found frozen to death in the grounds has been ordered to pay more than £250,000.

Hilda Fairweather, aged 91, died from hypothermia after walking out of the Abele View care home. She had not been reported as missing from the site until almost 12 hours after she walked out of an insecure fire door in January 2009.

The care home has now been fined £133,000 and told to pay costs of £122,412 because of the catalogue of blunders, which meant vascular dementia sufferer Mrs Fairweather had been 'completely overlooked'.



Hilda Fairweather. Previous incidents in which residents were allowed to wander off, including a barefoot elderly man who plunged into a ditch, represented a series of wake-up calls for the home, the court was told.

Risks

Although the fire door was found ajar shortly after Mrs Fairweather disappeared, the court heard a head count was not done. The company that owns the home, Abele View Ltd, pleaded guilty at an earlier hearing to failing to ensure the safety of its residents and an insufficient risk assessment.

Mrs Fairweather, originally from Kidderminster, was last seen by staff at 7.30pm on January 29, 2009, and was found dead at 7.45am the following day.

Prosecutor Mr Bernard Thorogood said: "In the intervening time she should have been put to bed."

Mr Thorogood outlined 18 instances of 'accepted criminality' on behalf of Abele View. As well as accepting its failures caused Mrs Fairweather's death, Abele View also acknowledges it had inadequate staffing levels, and that risks were created by poor supervision and management.

Previous incidents in which residents were allowed to wander off, including a barefoot elderly man who plunged into a ditch, represented a series of wake-up calls for the home, the court was told.

Mr Thorogood added: "The sad and deeply unattractive facts are that she had frozen to death outside the home on a freezing night in January when she should not have been able to get out."

Since the death, Mr Walker said alarmed external doors and other measures had been brought in at Abele View.

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High score achieved by health authority

HOSPITAL trusts serving Dudley ranked highly among patients attending their accident and emergency departments.

Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, which manages Russells Halls Hospital, and Worcestershire Acute scored well among the region's best.

The survey, called the Friends and Family Test, was compiled by NHS England. Officials asked respondents whether they would recommend the accident and emergency unit to friends and family. Dudley Group was given a score of 59 with the maximum attainable being 100.

Dudley Council's health scrutiny committee, Councillor Susan Ridley, said: "I think that it is very good news to hear that patients are satisfied with their treatment at the A&E department and it is good to know."

Dudley Group chief executive Paula Clarke said: "We are thrilled that our patients rate us higher than the national average, giving us a score of 59 for our accident and emergency services, and that this places us second highest in the Black Country."

"We will continue to use this data along with our real time comments and surveys to help improve our services."

Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospital NHS Trust scored 51.

Nearly 1,500 more are in arrears after bedroom tax

MORE than £360,000 has been clocked up in rent arrears by residents affected by the controversial 'bedroom tax' in Dudley borough, council chiefs have revealed.

The total number of tenants falling behind on their rent has increased by 17 per cent in a year. Latest figures show there were 9,601 tenants in arrears in the borough in September, compared with 8,153 in the same month last year. It is at its highest level for five years, which council bosses say is due to the impact of welfare reforms such as the bedroom tax.

Anyone in council or social rented housing faces a 14 per cent or 25 per cent cut in their housing benefit if they have one or more spare bedrooms - meaning families potentially paying hundreds of pounds extra a year in rent unless they move to a smaller home.

In September it was revealed £630,000 was owed by residents in Sandwell affected by the bedroom tax, while in Wolverhampton the bill stood at £55,000.

Of those in arrears in Dudley, 1,869 had been affected by the bedroom tax, resulting in £361,051 being owed. But the council said 666 of these tenants had already been in arrears before the welfare reforms were introduced in April.

Meanwhile, 41 tenants were in arrears after having their housing benefit

by Heather Large

capped, resulting in £10,833 being owed.

Director of adult, community and housing services, Andrea Pope-Smith, said in a report: "The income teams have seen a steady increase in the level of rent arrears outstanding."

Downsized

"Their current level is the highest it has been since 2008/09. This is due to the impact of welfare reforms but also due to the increasing number of accounts falling into arrears."

"The total arrears figure at September 30 for accounts subject to the benefit cap and the removal of the spare room subsidy was £371,834. This amount includes accounts where there were arrears present before the welfare reform changes were implemented."

A total of 2,704 households have been affected by the bedroom tax. The council says additional support has been provided for tenants including extra home visits and debt advice.

Big wheel returns to city



The wheel in Centenary Square will give bird's eye views

BIRMINGHAM'S famous festive German market is gearing up to open today (Thursday) for the first time for the 2013 festive season.

Over the past few days cranes have been busy unloading stalls from trucks which have come from Germany.

The big wheel is also back in Centenary Square for visitors who want a



Workers put together the stalls for the German Market

bird's eye view of the Christmas crowds and there will be an ice rink.

Frankfurters with mustard, hot Glühwein and sweet pretzels will be on the menu as the market opens for business for the 13th year.

Stretching for more than one mile from the Bullring to the ICC in Centenary Square, there will be a total of 190 stalls, including a craft market. It

is the biggest such market outside Germany and Austria. Millions of shoppers and revellers are anticipated.

Lord Mayor of Birmingham Councillor Mike Leddy and Mayor of Frankfurt Peter Feldmann will be officially declaring the 39-day market open on Friday. It will be open daily from 10am to 9pm.

No action on town's toilet plea petition

ACTION to improve a town's public toilets will be delayed again, despite a petition being submitted to Sandwell Council nearly two years ago.

Blackheath trader and former councillor Mary Docker submitted the 247-signature petition to Sandwell Council in December 2011, and said that apart from an acknowledgement of receipt she has heard nothing since.

The petition calls on the council to improve the public toilets in the town centre, on Henderson Way.

Review

But that petition is still being investigated by officers, 23 months on. Council officials were due to review progress by officers in response to petitions at a meeting yesterday (Thursday).

Papers for the meeting said that no proposals had yet been made to address the campaigners' calls.

The report said: "This matter is being investigated by officers and will be reported back to the cabinet member at a future meeting."

Libraries close

ALL libraries in the Dudley borough will close for one day to allow for staff training next month.

The libraries will close on December 4.

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NEWS FEATURE

IN MY VIEW

WITH
MARK
ANDREWS

APPEARING this week on the late-night television debating programme *The Agenda*, former Energy Secretary Chris Huhne talked about the different ways that political careers draw to a close.

"I don't think that was a very dignified way to leave politics," he said, referring to Ann Widdecombe's occasionally less-than-fleet-footed appearances on *Strictly Come Dancing*. And who could argue with that.

Appearing on a rather silly television programme and competing with a bunch of D-list attention seekers to garner the public vote is no way for any politician to carry on when they leave office. She might as well have stayed where she was.

Fortunately, there are still one or two former politicians who know how to leave office in a manner befitting the dignity of Parliament. Such as getting caught with your pants down after delivering pompous lectures about the importance of family life, to go through a very public divorce, and then finish the full shebang in the slammer after pleading guilty to perjury. Take a bow, Chris Huhne. You are a credit to your profession.

□□□□□

INCIDENTALLY, in the same appearance Mr Huhne argued that some of the greatest leaders of modern times were those who went straight into politics, without having a career beforehand.

"Take Churchill, he had done nothing outside politics, apart from a bit of gadding about in the Boer War."

I think Mr Huhne is being a bit harsh. Churchill is reported to have come under fire 50 times during his time in the armed forces. During a hasty retreat in India, he witnessed one of his comrades being hacked to death by a Pashtun tribesman, before leading his men to safety.

Then, while 'gadding about' in the Boer War, he escaped a PoW camp and travelled 300 miles through hostile territory.

Now, I realise that being shot at on your 21st birthday or fighting off prison guards in Pretoria might seem like a bit of a soft option compared to discussing wind farms with Vince Cable or sitting in on a EU debate on subsidiarity, but not everyone is cut out for the rough-and-tumble of the Westminster jungle.

Still it's good to know that in the week when politicians of all colours are queuing up to be seen paying tribute to Our Boys that this distinguished elder statesman has lost none of his respect for military service.

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NEWSPAPER headline last week: "Mark Bosnich bites tongue after Sir Alex Ferguson autobiography labels Aussie 'a terrible professional'."

Perhaps it's just as well Sir Alex wasn't having a pop at Luis Suarez.



Gary Price, left, from the Well food bank at a collection at an Asda store



Wendy Fryatt shows Bishop David some of the food bank's stock

Crisis-hit families need food banks

More people are turning to the service just to survive. **MARK ANDREWS** spoke to the volunteers who run this vital lifeline

THE shelves are stacked high with tins and food packets. Pallets are filled with jars of jam, marmalade and tinned fruit.

But this warehouse is not at the back of a supermarket, and its customers will not be asked to pay for their food.

The Well, on a business park on the outskirts of Wolverhampton, is one of a growing number of food banks which have sprung up in the West Midlands during the last 10 years.

Founder member Gary Price, who runs the service with his wife Caroline, believes continued economic pressures will only mean more and more people will be turning to their services in years to come.

Affluent

"During the first year, we fed 67 people," says Gary, who set up the service in 2006. "This year it will be around 11,000." It is not just people from the usual deprived neighbourhoods, either.

"That was the case to begin with, but these days we find that more and more we're delivering to the more affluent areas, places like Tettenhall Wood, Codsall and Wombourne.

"It can happen to anybody. You have two people who lose their jobs at the same time," says the 48-year-old.

"You might have a wife who is bringing up the children, and then the husband leaves her and she hasn't got anything to live on. Most people have enough money to last them two weeks before they get themselves into problems."

Gary and Caroline became involved with The Well after a visiting speaker came to King's Church, Wolverhampton, and told them about a similar service



Gary Price, left, from the Well food bank at a collection at an Asda store. On the right is his wife Caroline who helps run the service

running in Birmingham. We believed there was a need in society, and the church could help fill that."

It is a similar story over at the Black Country Food Bank, Dudley formed in 2006 by Wendy Fryatt.

In seven years, it has grown from being on a table in her kitchen into a network of 15 distribution centres covering the whole of the borough of Dudley, much of Sandwell and Walsall, and also some areas of Wolverhampton. As well as distributing food, the Black Country Food Bank also provides clothing to people in need.

"Last year we fed 12,000 people. By August this year, we had already fed 14,000," she says.

"I was coming out of church one day and the idea just came to me," she said. "It began with just me and one other

fighting for unfair dismissal he needed feeding, and he had nothing left to live off."

"People think it's those on benefits, but usually it's when the benefits aren't there that there are real problems."

Not everybody receives help. Both The Well and Black Country Food Bank work on a referral basis, where aid is only given to people who have been assessed by outside agencies, and vouchers issued saying they are in genuine need.

The Well, which is unlike most food banks in that it's a single, independent organisation, is also unusual because it provides a delivery service.

Gary's team of around 60 volunteers distribute food parcels of basic essentials for each household, typically containing food worth between £30 and £35. There are also limits on the number of parcels any household can receive in a specific period.

Various

"We are there to help people in the event of a crisis, what we do not want is people becoming dependent on us, without anything being done to tackle the underlying problems," he says.

Both charities work with various agencies, including Citizens' Advice, churches and social services.

Wendy recalls on one occasion being approached by a midwife who was concerned about a young couple whose baby she had just delivered.

"They were 'sofa surfing', sleeping on somebody's sofa because they didn't have a permanent address," she says.

"The baby was just two weeks old, and was sleeping in a car seat. We did a collection for baby stuff, provided a crib, and made a contribution towards the household where they were staying."

Wendy is under no illusions that there will always be people around who will try to exploit the goodwill of the volunteers and donors to food banks, but believes that by and large the agencies do a good job in separating those in genuine need from those who are simply on the take.

THROUGH THE YEARS

1983...

A BITTER war of words broke out between Nottingham Forest manager Brian Clough and Wolves chairman Derek Dougan, with Clough calling for Dougan to be removed from his post. The controversial Forest boss spoke out after his side beat Wolves 5-0. It was reported that the two centre-forwards had not seen eye-to-eye for many years, and that a few weeks earlier Dougan had criticised Clough for his attitude towards televised football.

A MULTI-million pound blitz on 27 square miles of land beside a railway route labelled the ugliest in Britain was unveiled by West Midlands County Council. The authority had earmarked £20 million alone for the first year of the Greenline project, to spruce up the view of the West Coast Main Line between Wolverhampton and Birmingham.

1993...

TEN people were killed when a tourist coach plunged down a motorway embankment, with several more badly hurt. The scene of the M2 in Kent where the overturned 52-seat coach came to rest was described as one of blood and carnage.

WOLVES legend Billy Wright and club chairman Sir Jack Hayward were denied the freedom of borough by a council political wrangle. The ruling Tory-Liberal Democrat coalition had put forward Wright, and Sir Jack, as being suitable but the Labour group exercised its veto, saying former council leader John Bird, instrumental in saving the club from liquidation, should be honoured as well.

WEST Midlands aristocrat Hon. Tessa Smart said she had would be sticking to her £400 Skoda after her latest in a long line of high-performance cars was stolen.

2003...

FORMER Slade star Jimmy Lea backed MPs who wanted to stop his famous hit Merry Xmas Everybody from being played in shops before Christmas. The Brewdour-based bass player backed calls from MPs Stephen Pound and Colin Breed for retailers to stop playing Christmas music before the festive season.

BLACK Country Pop Idol hopeful Mark Rhodes had provided a huge boost to the region's reputation, despite ribbing over his accent, said an academic. Wolverhampton University's principal lecturer in English, Ursula Clark heaped praise on the Darlaston-based singer for sticking to his Black Country tones.

GERMAINE Greer spoke of her sadness at the disappearance of the industrial landscape when she addressed an audience at Stourbridge Town Hall.

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LETTERS

Sympathy over threat to son's home

RE: ARTICLE in Dudley Chronicle, October 2, on Mr Colin Davies. I know exactly what Mr Davies is going through because I went through exactly the same and it went on for three long and very stressful years. My aunt died in November 2003 and I wanted to succeed the tenancy of the house. My family had lived in the property since it was built in 1951 and to me it was not just a house, it was a home, my past, my present and my future. I had numerous letters and threats off the council, went to court, etc. I represented myself until January 2006, when I appointed Haden's Solicitors to represent me and they were brilliant. Unless anyone's been through the

same situation themselves, they cannot begin to imagine the intense stress. You feel depressed, sickened to your stomach, that you face losing everything. You have the grief of losing a family member, then the stress of losing the home you love. You don't want to be uprooted from your home, community and life you've always known.

Mr Davies has always lived in that home, he's always been part of the community, he's had enough grief losing his mother, he's made that home beautiful, why should he have to leave it?

The case with my home eventually went in my favour in November 2006. I had Mrs Mary Hill, a former mayor of

Dudley and councillor, as one of my witnesses. The case ended up being presided over by a high court judge. Somehow I stuck in there.

I want to help Mr Davies. My husband and I will also sign the petition. More empathy should be shown to people. These people who tell people they've got to come out of the home they've known all their lives, the home they've looked after, etc, how would they like it if the same was done to them? If Mr Davies wants any help and backing from me, he's got it 100 percent.

M CADDICK
Woodsetton
Dudley

LETTERS to the Editor

POST

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expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number of the writer. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Hippodrome would be a popular venue

IT'S ALL gone very quiet on whether Dudley Hippodrome is pulled down, or have the council come to their senses and started to listen to the thousands of people who put their names forward to save this wonderful building?

Theatre has never been so popular. My wife and I often go down to London care of the Express & Star Readers, and you can't get a ticket for love or money at times. It's the same with local theatres, they are thriving and recently we popped over to Stourbridge Town Hall to catch the very popular Cole Porter's Anything Goes. Every night and matinees the place was packed. So we are sure that if we gave Dudley Hippodrome a new life, the theatre would be packed. People are fed up with TV and, in some cases, all the four letter words in many of the programmes.

Dudley Council needs to wake up. Gone are the days when Dudley had a thriving town centre. We had a railway, a sport centre for soccer and cricket. We often saw Worcester CCC playing their matches and had four cinemas. I could go on.

We now have a great speedway team, Dudley Heathens, they have a tremendous following but the council would rather let them use other tracks. What a waste.

I was born in Dudley, I lived in the Dock Lane area, my big friend of those days was Duncan Edwards, tragically killed in the Munich air disaster, a great footballer who could have been the greatest. My wife and I now live in Stourbridge, a really thriving town - a new bus station, a £50m Tesco in the town centre plus new shops, new houses and flowers in boxes giving the town centre a colourful look and winning prizes for the town. There's also plenty of clubs.

We love our zoo and Black Country museum but you only visit them once a year. The theatre will treat us to great shows every week.

J WARDLE
Enville Street
Stourbridge

Simple solution to the problem with pensions

WE have a problem with pensions. On the one hand the private sector feel aggrieved by the pensions received in the public sector and on the other hand the public sector employees are not happy about having to pay increased charges to maintain their pensions.

Why not offer every worker a final salary public sector pension underwritten by the government and do away with the state pension? It could be offered on a voluntary basis and everyone joining would be subject to the same rules of contribution. The pension industry would do anything to stop it but they would have to participate in some form or other to avoid going out of business. It would certainly put paid to those high-flying bonus seekers remunerated at the expense of the public.

The downside would be that with the state pension gone, which may in any case be the ultimate objective of the government, anyone without a pension would be reliant on means tested benefits.

This system is so simple, I am surprised that no one has thought of it before. Or, sadly in my naivety have I drifted into the world of idealism.

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CLUB NEWS

History of women's glass role

MY TIME OVER FIFTIES

THE October meeting began with a talk from Kate Round about the role of women in the glass industry. Kate's research traces woman's role up to the modern day.

Looking at the Stourbridge glass industry one of the first women Kate found in her research was Sara Worrall, who married Michael Grazebrook II. Sara ran Audnam Glassworks after his death in 1766.

In the Dudley archives are papers relating to Catherine Littlewood who was employed to decorate the blanks that she had to buy first, earning £6 per quarter. By 1885 J. Northwood had an etching shop in Barnett Lane, employing 50 to 60 women, who were allowed to use Northwood's etching machine and had a women supervisor.

Also in the archives are papers relating to Phoebe Cartwright, who signed apprenticeship papers in August 1882, bound for five years unless she died or married, to work at a rate of seven shillings per week. She was a marker and decorator of glass, and also had to instruct other employees.

In 1917 due to labour shortages, agreements were made with the unions to allow women into the glass factory, but if there were work shortages women were to be "reduced" first.

On November 27, David Skitt will talk about the Severn Valley Railway.

Names that made a county famous



Sister Dora and David Garrick featured in Alan Lewis' talk on Staffordshire



PENN TOWNSWOMEN

ONCE the usual business was completed, Chairman Ursula McInnes introduced speaker Alan Lewis who was introduced to talk on "Things you might not know about Staffordshire from 918."

It was a very interesting and enjoyable talk. Many famous and interesting people came from Staffordshire. In 1974 the borders changed, prior to that Wolverhampton was in Staffordshire.

Charles II hid near Boscobel House in an oak tree, David Garrick, an actor, in 1759 wrote Hearts of Oak, Dorothy Pattinson - Sister Dora - was stationed in Walsall and looked after many wounded soldiers.

Eighteen Staffordshire men won the VC in the two World Wars, Colin Grazier from Tamworth assisted in obtaining two instruction books on the Enigma Code Machine from a sinking U-boat. He was awarded a posthumous George Cross.

In 1927, the Sunbeam Mystery, built in Wolverhampton, with 1000bhp, became the first non-American to run and beat the land speed record on Daytona Beach in the USA at 203.79 mph.

On November 27, Richard Bifield will give a talk on 'A Brief History of Telford'.

Attempt to vacuum budgie

THE BLACK COUNTRY SOCIETY - KINGSWINFORD BRANCH

AT the October meeting, Alan Peace gave an amusing talk on 'Never Work with Children and Animals'.

Alan spoke about various animals he and his family have had, starting with trying to vacuum the pet budgie at the age of nine.

His wife and family have fed bats that have become dehydrated and baby rabbits

who have become orphaned. Alan has also been involved in organising trips for under-privileged children.

On November 20, the speaker is David Burton-Pye. On December 11, Mike Dickens will talk about the

'BBC during the 1930s' followed by wine and mince pies.

Talks are open to all and take place at 7.45pm at the Church Centre, behind St. Mary's Church Kingswinford.

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NEWS

'We will remember them'



Mayor Councillor Alan Finch pays respects to those people of the borough who made the ultimate sacrifice

The ATC band lead the Remembrance Day parade through Dudley town centre on Sunday

THE NATION fell silent on Monday to remember the war dead on Armistice Day following a high turn out at Remembrance Sunday events across the region.

Veterans braved the rain and cold along with councillors and members of the public to attend the service at the Clock Tower in Priory Street in Dudley at 11am on Monday.

Sacrifices

The ceremony, which marks the end of the First World War, featured the laying of wreaths and a two minute silence.

Councillor Alan Finch, Mayor of Dudley, said: "We had an excellent turn out despite the very poor weather which just goes to show the strength of

feeling an event likes this has in Dudley."

In Dudley, thousands of people flocked to pay their respects to the heroes of the armed forces at the annual Remembrance Sunday parade and service.

Councillors, cadets, students from Dudley College were among the people who packed Coronation Gardens for the service.

The ceremony was held in front of the cenotaph.

The parade featured armed forces veterans and music from the Salvation Army band.

Councillor Finch said: "Our Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day services are two extremely important events because they provide us with an opportunity to remember the huge sacrifices our armed forces men and women make for us."

Hundreds of people also attended a service in Lower Gornal on Sunday.

A service took place at St James' Church with a wreath laid on behalf of the Burma Star Association by three great-grandchildren of former member Arthur Box.

Mr Box's son Dave was Parade Marshall for the event, which was the church's best-attended service yet.

He said: "With modern warfare more families are affected, and there are families in the village with people that fought, and as more and more youngsters go out there more and more families get involved."

"Also schools promote services a lot more than before, so we have more youngsters coming now than those aged in their 20s and 30s."

There were also Remembrance Sunday events in Sedgley, Quarry Bank and Kingswinford.

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MEMORY LANE



Little to smile about – this rare photograph shows the inside West Bromwich's Union Workhouse laundry, in Hallam Street



Albion stars Brian Whitehouse, Don Howe, and Roy Horobin sign their first professional contracts in 1950



'The Golden Mile' – the name given the long stretch of West Bromwich High Street, which is pictured looking towards Dartmouth Square in around 1920



The unique No 14 bus from West Bromwich to Walsall



The sideways-facing armchairs of the No 14 bus

All aboard bucket seats on the unique No14 bus

THERE is a sense of almost boyish excitement as Terry Price pores over the pictures in his new book.

"I was really chuffed when I got that one," he says, pointing to the interior shot of a bus.

Terry just loves photographs of West Bromwich. It doesn't matter whether they are from 1901 or 1994, to the retired television engineer every picture tells a story.

His latest book, *West Bromwich Recollections*, is his seventh such publication, and the discovery of every picture brings with it fresh excitement.

The interior of the bus was a real find, and is unique in that instead of the usual forward-facing seats, the top deck has a line of bucket-style armchairs facing sideways.

"In 1930, around the time the picture was taken, the route from West Bromwich to Walsall would have been through open countryside, and the

by Mark Andrews

seats were designed to allow passengers to look out of the windows and enjoy the view," he says.

The view would certainly have been very different from the scene today, but it is not hard to pity the poor conductor, who would have had the unenviable task of clambering up the narrow gangway alongside the seats.

Another interesting curio is the Threepenny Bit fish and chip shop in Parsonage Street, which takes its name not from the price of the chips – that would have been remarkable, even in 1967 – but from its curious geometric profile. Sadly, it was demolished around 13 years ago.

Terry believes the 1923 photograph showing the inside of the world-famous Hudson's soap works is the only one in existence – Robert Spear Hudson was the inventor of modern soap powder.

Included are images of West Brom-

wich Albion players signing their first professional contracts, as well as a magnificent beacon built to celebrate King George V's Silver Jubilee in 1935.

The area covered is broader than many publications, taking in places such as Great Bridge and Friar Park.

For Terry, recording West Bromwich's past is very much a labour of love. He has never made a penny from any of his seven books, having donated all the proceeds to local charities.

He ruminates over the changes of the past few decades. "They used to call West Bromwich High Street the Golden Mile, because there was that long stretch of shops. The shopkeepers would have lived nearby and their children would have gone to the local school." Then he pauses for thought.

"You do realise that we are the last generation that will be able to remember the high street, don't you?"

● *West Bromwich Recollections* by Terry Price is available from the author priced £9.99 on 01922 635891.



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NEWS

Trust maps out which areas need upgrading

THE TRUST which runs Sandwell Hospital has identified key areas to improve quality and safety.

Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust, which also runs Rowley Regis and City Hospitals, has drawn up a list of areas it will focus on in the light of the Francis Report.

And at a meeting members of the hospitals trust board reaffirmed its backing of the priority areas which were agreed earlier this year, as well as backing new ones they would look at.

The Francis Report made 290 recommendations for hospital trusts to abide by following the scandal at the Mid-Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust.

Following that, the Keogh Reviews were published in July and examined quality issues at 14 trusts that have had consistently high mortality rates and set eight ambitions for the NHS.

A report which was discussed by the trust board last week, said: "Several of these ambitions mirror declared SWBH priorities following the publication of the Francis Report."

In February the Trust

by Lisa Wright

Board agreed six priority areas for improvement – culture, mortality, care of the frail and elderly, complaints, patient experience and nurse staffing. Since then, risk management and improved data quality and data analysis have also been added as priorities.

Analysis by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) regulator found 44 trusts with the most serious level of concern, including higher than expected death rates across their hospitals.

It placed trusts in six bands, with band one considered high risk and band six the lowest.

Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Health Trust was placed in band four and trust bosses have said they are pleased with the ranking.

Changing crisis calls for chrysanthemums



Flower power for new shop owner Carl Pearce

A FORMER emergency services call operator is blooming cheered after swapping a response centre for his newly-opened flower shop in Great Bridge.

Up until last year Carl Pearce was the calm voice heard by thousands of people who ring the West Midlands Ambulance service each year – but in a moment of inspiration he decided to swap his busy job and set up shop.

On June 15 this year he took over a florist shop to set up Great Bridge Flowers and Gifts, even though he had never run a business before.

Sparkle

He said: "Before starting this job I use to answer 999 calls on a daily basis. I have taken a lot of skills from my last job dealing with people and used them here. The response in Great Bridge has been amazing. Everyone I have spoken to has said I have brought the sparkle back to Great Bridge."

Having spent more than £25,000 refitting the shop, repairing a collapsing floor and building a small seated area the 34-year-old from Stourbridge is reaping the benefits.

He also kept on three talented florists from the last owner, securing their jobs for the future. "This shop has always been a flower shop, even my nan remembers it being a flower shop, so I knew it was a good bet," he said.

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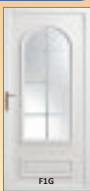
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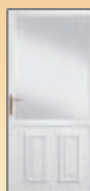
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NEWS

New West Brom HQ looks to future



Work will start on the multi-level building in December



An artist's impression of the new West Brom building



The new reception area has a stylish modern design

WITH its crisp white walls and floors, twinned with glass furnishings, it could be the setting of a futuristic sci-fi film.

But this is a glimpse of the future of one of the region's big-est firms – and judging by the images, it's a future that is looking bright.

These artist's impressions show how the multi-million pound new headquarters of the West Brom Building Society will look, as it emerged work to build the site will start in December. Midlands-based firm Thomas Vale Construction was today announced as the main contractor for

the 70,000 sq ft new building which will be located at Providence Place in West Bromwich town centre.

Construction is scheduled to start in December with an anticipated completion date of spring 2015, after which staff will relocate from the building society's current head office on High Street.

Combine

Planners at Sandwell Council approved the scheme in June.

Jonathan Westhoff, the West Brom's chief executive, said: "Thomas Vale is renowned for its ability to combine inspirational design, quality construction and project management experience of the highest order. After an extensive tender process, Thomas Vale

emerged as our preferred candidate, reflecting their record and experience."

Mr Westhoff added that Thomas Vale will work alongside the existing design team, which includes Capita and Associated Architects.

The West Brom's new head office will accommodate up to 700 staff providing support for the building society's network of 37 branches.

It will also house an administration centre offering direct services for West Brom savings accounts, mortgages and investments. Mr Westhoff added: "With the announcement of the appointed construction company we are at a stage where people will soon see the development start to take shape."

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NEWS

Bid to ease pressure on A&E service

A £100,000 pilot project will be run at Rowley Regis Hospital to try to alleviate pressures on A&E over the busy winter period.

An acute assessment unit is being introduced to help reduce demand on Sandwell and City hospitals. It is planned to open this month.

Meanwhile, 50 new beds will be opened in Sandwell and City hospitals to cope with rising patient numbers. Extra doors are to be fitted in Sandwell Hospital to prevent the spread of infections such as the norovirus.

Vanya Rogers, spokeswoman for Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust, said: "It is a winter pilot programme and we are expecting it to cost around £100,000."

The unit will work like a 'front door' system, to provide patient assessments as quickly as possible.

Art's stamp of approval

YOUNGSTERS are being asked to design a Christmas stamp. Dudley Philatelic Society is running a competition for the borough's eight to 12-year-olds with prizes for the top three entries.

The design must be original, colour and on A4 paper. The entrant's name, age and address should be on the reverse of the entry which should be sent to Dudley Philatelic Society, c/o J. Southall, 1 Royal Oak Road, Halesowen, B62 0DZ. Closing date is December 6.

Amazing appliance still going after 90 years



Contest winner Mary Waite, of Halesowen, with her vintage 1920's Piccolo, and the store's managing director Robert Chapman



Harry Burrows, aged nine, who collects old vacuum cleaners



Stan and Norma Rose, with their 1954 wedding gift toaster

ONE minute it could be mincing meat or mixing a cake and the next doing the vacuum cleaning or even paint spraying.

The incredible Piccolo multi-purpose machine, made by Hammelmann Werke, may be nearly 90 years old and more likely to be found in a German museum.

But it is still in regular use in the Waite household in Halesowen. And now it has won a competition to find the oldest working electrical domestic appliance in the Black Country.

The gadget was given, still in its original wrappings, to Ivor Waite and his wife, Mary, in the 1960s by his aunt, Cicely Phipps, when she cleared out items from her London flat after the death of her husband, who bought and sold goods.

Reliable

"It does everything," said Mrs Waite, now aged 61, of Iwerley Road, Halesowen.

"It's a coffee grinder, a mincer, a food processor - a vacuum cleaner, paint sprayer - you name it, it can do it."

"The attachments all plug into one machine."

"Our son, David, still uses it to vacuum his car and I use the meat mincer and the coffee grinder."

"Although it dated from the 1920s, it had never been used when we were given it and it's never broken down."

Chapmans Electrical, in Cradley Heath, launched the quest to dig out old household gadgets to celebrate a £100,000 investment at its showroom in Reddall Hill Road.

The Waite family is now being offered a prize of a modern-day appliance of their choice, which Mrs Waite said was likely to be a music centre.

"It's surprising what people have still got in good working order," said managing director Robert Chapman, who is now displaying some of the competition entries in his new high-tech showroom.

Among them is a bright chrome toaster, given to Stan and Norma Rose, of Roundhills Road, Halesowen, as a wedding present 59 years ago - and they still sometimes use it as they warm up to celebrate their diamond anniversary.

The Morphy Richards toaster was a gift from Jim Priest, son of the owner of TR Priest's electrical shop in Blackheath, where Stan, now aged 89, used to work.

And Norma, who celebrated her 84th birthday yesterday (Wednesday), said: "It's still like brand new."

"We have had other toasters since but we still use this one now and again."

"They made things to last in those days."

Also on display in the new showroom is a 1930s Electrolux vacuum cleaner entered by 15-year-old Harry Burrows, of Lapal, Halesowen, who collects sweepers.

A £25 voucher given to him as a runner-up in the competition has now been spent - on an order for a brand new Miele vacuum cleaner to add to his collection.

Other ageing electrical gems on show include a 1950s sun lamp belonging to John Chapman - no relation to the company - aged 70, of Spies Lane, Halesowen.

Meanwhile, Ken Young, aged 74, of Marquis Drive, Halesowen, submitted a transistor radio which was given to him by company founder Ewart Chapman as a Christmas present when he worked there from the age of 15.

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NEWS

Hairdresser stole cash from purses of two pensioners

A MOBILE hairdresser who stole cash from the purses of two elderly customers was caught when a suspicious relative installed CCTV in one of their homes.

Louise Hemmings' victims were a 84-year-old woman with dementia from Hurst Green in Halesowen and a 92-year-old with hearing problems from Harborne.

Hemmings, aged 39, of Shenley Fields Road in Selly Oak, had even earmarked the vulnerable customers on her client list.

She was finally stopped when a suspicious son of the 84-year-old victim set up cameras and caught Hemmings stealing cash from his mother's purse as they went upstairs in September.

Hemmings initially denied theft but, after being shown the footage, admitted stealing a total of £75 over three visits to the Halesowen victim and pocketing £20 from her Harborne client.

At Dudley Magistrates' Court, Hemmings, who pleaded guilty to four counts of theft, was given a 26-week jail sentence suspended for 12 months.

She was also ordered to carry out 150 hours of unpaid work in the community and to pay compensation to her victims.

Pc Joanne Poultny said: "Hemmings is clearly a threat to vulnerable adults. In interview she admitted targeting these ladies due to their age and fading mental capacity."

"These were very cruel thefts and, though the amount of money stolen was relatively small, she came very close to being jailed."

The police officer praised the thinking of the Halesowen victim's son in installing CCTV to catch Hemmings in the act.

Dementia

She said: "His mother suffers from dementia-related memory issues so he has power of attorney over her finances."

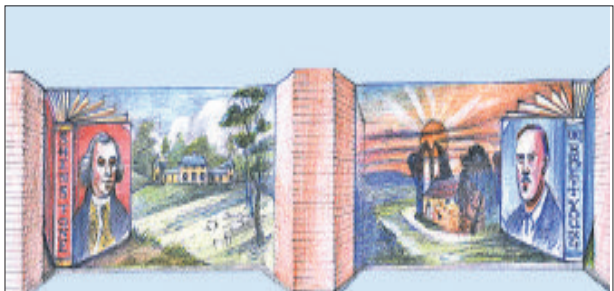
"He always made sure she had enough cash in her purse for shopping trips and groceries."

"However, he noticed notes left in her purse were vanishing without explanation. He installed a camera in the hallway and didn't have to wait long before it showed Hemmings slyly reach into his mother's bag as they walked upstairs to wash the victim's hair."

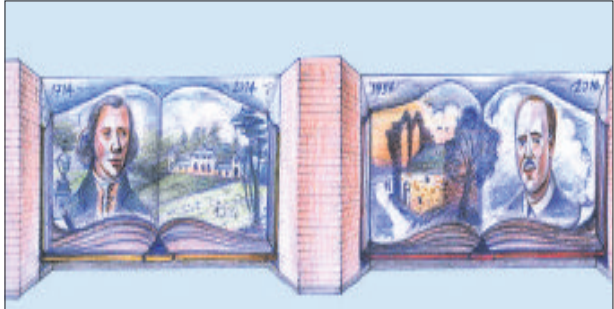
"Minutes later the camera showed them both walk back past the bag where she'd return the purse minus the cash."

Anyone else who believes they were targeted by Hemmings should call police on 101.

Mural designs revealed for Cornbow Hall venue



The first design for a mural celebrating the lives of the two writers linked to Halesowen



The second design for a proposed mural featuring poet Shenstone and author Brett Young

DESIGNS for colourful murals honouring two giants of the literary world have been unveiled.

Artist Steve Field has begun work on the tributes to Halesowen's famous sons – poet William Shenstone and author Francis Brett Young.

The murals will be painted in the town's Cornbow Hall next year – a significant year for both of the writers.

Dudley borough artist Mr Field has drawn two different sketches which show both men in a setting relating to their well-known work.

Shenstone also designed The Leasowes park in Halesowen, while Brett Young set much of his writing in local areas such as Halesowen,

Dudley, Birmingham and Worcestershire.

Mr Field has now started more detailed research and design work after completing the preliminary sketches, for the two-part mural for the main activity room at the hall, earlier this year.

Concepts

He has created two preliminary concepts for the mural, which will be discussed with local history groups.

The designs show portraits of the men within giant books with a backdrop of the house at Leasowes as it was when Shenstone lived there. His house has been replaced by a golf clubhouse.

The ruins of Halesowen Abbey feature for the picture of Brett Young, who

referred to the town as Halesby in his novels.

Mr Field said he would welcome relevant research material from local historians to help with the project.

The mural will be unveiled next year as June 29, 2014 will mark the 130th anniversary of the birth of Brett Young, and November 18, 2014, is the 300th anniversary of Shenstone's birth.

It is estimated that £6,000 will be spent on each mural including materials and installation.

Dudley Council's culture chief Councillor Tracy Wood said: "I am pleased to see work to honour two greats of Halesowen's history is well under way and we look forward to seeing work on the painted murals starting next year."

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THEATRE REVIEW

Frantic farce as classic gets a Brummie twist



Table talk for Sian Brooke and Paul Hunter playing married couple Elmire and Orgon. Picture by Ellie Kurtz



Mark Williams is scruffy scoundrel Tartuffe in Rep artistic director Roxanna Silbert and Chris Campbell's version

Tartuffe, The Rep, Birmingham
BRUMMIE actor Mark Williams comes home to star in this rollicking, up-dated version of Moliere's 17th Century comedy.

He actually doesn't appear until half way through the first act but it is to the credit of an excellent ensemble cast that the audience does not get impatient for the Harry Potter and Father Brown actor.

Williams plays the crumpled rogue Tartuffe, who has inveigled his way into a wealthy household by persuad-

ing the master of the house Orgon that he is a pious Christian whilst actually lusting after Orgon's wife Elmire, who then devises a plan to expose his hypocrisy.

In the capable hands of director Roxana Silbert, this is turned into a topical fast-paced farce with lots of ribald humour, slapstick violence and local references from Lee Longlands to Wolverhampton.

Panic

On a set best described as 'Solihull baroque', Paul Hunter gives a master-class in frenetic physical comedy when the blinkered Orgon realises he has been duped - his panic is a sight to behold.

There are also fine performances from Ayesha Antoine, an absolute fire-cracker as mouthy maid Dorine; Janice Connolly ruling the roost as a barking mad grandmother; and Sian Brooke as the exasperated Elmire.

But the calm centre of all this frantic foolery is Williams, who doesn't waste a single gesture as the cunning fraudster.

His comic performance is spot on and, like his victims, the audience ends up charmed by the scruffy scoundrel.

If you enjoyed One Man Two Guvnors, you will love this.

Tartuffe continues at The Rep until Saturday, November 16.

Leon Burakowski

GAME REVIEWS

Time to heed Duty's call – or return to Gotham with Batman

THE BAT is back but he's not particularly better In *Batman Arkham Origins* (16), third part of the Arkham series that has helped reinvent the Dark Knight for gamers.

WB Montreal has taken over from London-based Rocksteady as the game developer and has done a steady reliable job on the franchise rather than bringing any radical new aspects to the Batman saga.

This is a prequel to *Arkham Asylum* with a five-years-younger Batman having to face down the world's most deadly assassins after crime boss Black Mask puts a bounty on the head of the caped crusader. To complicate matters, Gotham has been hit by a big winter snow storm and the local police department are once again proving to be rather unhelpful to the vigilante superhero. And another supervillain, The Riddler under his previous guise of Enigma, is providing additional challenges.

Gadgets

But Batman's handy array of gadgets mean there is a solution to every problem as our hero glides around Gotham using his cape and sometimes firing his Batclaw for a boost or his Batarang to take out enemies or open doors. New gizmos include a very handy Remote Claw for creating a zip wire between two fixed points, or to send enemies crashing into each other, and Shock Gloves to pack his punch with high voltage. Whilst most of the criminal goons are no match for our hero, Batman does have some increasingly gruelling encounters with such new villains as the hulking Enforcer.

Batman achieves victory with a mix of stealth and violence and there is more emphasis here on his detective skills. As well as the X-ray-like vision that enables our hero to check out a room of assailants in advance and make a plan of action, there is a new ability here via the Batcomputer to review the scene of crime to explore various scenarios and hunt for clues.

And when it comes to trading blows, the balletic Freeflow combat system is still staggeringly good.

In multiplayer mode, there are opportunities to play as Batman or Robin or as one of The Joker or Bane's gang.

Overall, WB Montreal seem to have taken the 'if it ain't broke why fix it' approach which explains why this game is good rather than great.

The return of Batman was soon overshadowed by the arrival of *Call of Duty Ghosts* (16), which got dedicated gamers queuing up to get their hands on the biggest game of the year.

It certainly lives up to its hefty price tag with an all-action romp that switches from Los Angeles experiencing armageddon to a zero gravity battle on a space station within the first ten minutes.



Caped crusader back in action in *Batman Arkham Origins*



On Duty yet again as the Ghosts take on The Federation

The new installment is set in the near future where a united South America, called the Federation, launches a sneak attack on the USA by hi-jacking city-blasting space weapon Odin. Then we fast-forward a few years to a post-apocalypse vision of America where the remaining US troops are involved in a guerilla war against the Federation.

It's a far-fetched but absorbing story, initially more character driven than previous CoDs. It looks fantastic and will easily absorb gamers for a whole day, at the least.

New to multiplayer is the chance to forge your own highly customised cohort of troopers. You could hone your super-trooper for months or just dive into the gun-blazing action. Either way, you get plenty of bang for your buck.

Games reviewed on Xbox 360.

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For a different sort of experience, two nights are reserved at the Safari Hotel, which has a pool, bar and restaurant overlooking the Tiffa Lake. Just 45 minutes from the Yala National Park this is the base for an early morning start to the jeep safari in the hope of seeing leopard, elephants, saltwater crocodiles, wild boar, sloth bears, monitor lizards and a huge variety of birdlife. The three-star superior Palms Hotel in the beach resort of Beruwela is the final port of call, allowing for two days of rest and relaxation before the journey home.



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NEARLY 25 years on, Miss Saigon has shown its enduring popularity by setting a new box office record ahead of its return to London next year.

The musical by Alain Boublil and Claude-Michel Schönberg sees Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* relocated to Saigon in 1975 and tells the story of a young Vietnamese bar worker called Kim who falls in love with a GI called Chris.

Miss Saigon opens at the Prince Edward Theatre in May 2014, the production's 25th anniversary year. Book your break now choosing from one of the options below.

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Saturday Night

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*Other West End shows are also available to book. Further details can be found online or in our Theatre brochures.

**The "from" price and price bands vary for each show - see brochure for details.

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MUSIC REVIEWS

Bugg breaks into a smile at sing-along

Jake Bugg, 02 Academy, Birmingham
SERIOUS young singer-songwriter Jake Bugg let his pokerface slip twice during the third of his sell-out Birmingham dates, revealing that rarest of sights – a Jake Bugg smile.

The 19-year-old from Nottingham seemed surprised by the response of the Birmingham crowd, who sang along with every song from his chart-topping self-titled debut album like they were 20-year-old classics.

But then the talented teenager – who upset 1D fans by criticising their manufactured pop icons – does write (and co-writes) guitar-driven songs with an authentic heritage feel. Songs such as Lightning Bolt (the final encore of his 70-minute set) could have come from the 1950s skiffle era.

Whilst other teens have been watching The X-Factor, Bugg has been listening to old Neil Young, Donovan and blues records. But the lyrics often tackle the gritty business of growing up in broken Britain, as on Two Fingers and Trouble Town.

Energy

Songs from his soon-to-be-released second album Shangri La, recorded in Malibu with Metallica and Johnny Cash producer Rick Rubin, show a heavier direction with the Jake Bugg trio delivering an epic wall-of-sound.

But Bugg has not abandoned his acoustic style. Ballad A Song About Love, also from the new album, was passionately delivered whilst Slumville Sunrise has similar kinetic energy to Lightning Bolt.

Support came from rootsy country duo HoneyHoney from Los Angeles (nice but samey) and Bath band of brothers The Family Rain, a



Jake Bugg – smiled, twice

powerhouse trio featuring the Walter siblings. They have hairy heavy rock tendencies and should be worth checking out when they play The Institute in Digbeth on Saturday, November 23.

Leon Burakowski

Pilgrims' prowess

Pilgrims' Way
 Newhampton Inn,
 Wolverhampton

FOR a four piece band Pilgrims' Way have the baggage of a travelling orchestra. The great thing is they are not just for show, the band from Stockport are versatile and talented. They switch instruments ad infinitum including hurdy gurdy, the kazoo, Jew's harp, squeeze-box, accordion, fiddles, guitars and mandolin.

There is also a fantastic energy and enthusiasm when they perform. Elf-like Lucy Wright, mainly on vocals but also playing second fiddle – an ironic misnomer – and Jew's harp, even threw in a little dancing.

There was incredible fiddle playing from Tom Kitching who doubled up with the mandolin. Edwin Beasant mostly played accordion, chipped in on squeezebox, harmonica and guitar. The fourth and newest member was Jon Loomes who played the evocative hurdy gurdy.

Danny Farragher

Better by Bus



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BUBBLY 60 plus lady, slim, fair hair, comfy in jeans and leather jacket, seeks similar male for friendship etc. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408859

JOANNA 34, in need of tlc, wining, dining being treated like the princess I am, looking for sugar daddy, that someone special to love me. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408869

ROSA, 27yrs, seductive foreign beauty. Seeks no strings discreet fun, any area. Call to hear my desires. ACA. Tel No: 0905 002 1961 Box 408093

MARIA gorgeous outgoing bbw 27, good fun, caring, romantic, looking for that special someone to share life with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408733

KIM attractive single lady new to area looking for meet new friends and maybe a new love interest. I have many hobbies and am interesting to know. pls call me. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408489

ANNA, busty mature lady seeks no strings discreet meetings with male any age or location. Tel No: 0905 002 1956 Box No: 366019

TAYLOR attractive very busty curvy black female looking for fun times with open-minded male who is also looking for fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408311

BETHANY 25yr old blonde, slim size 10 with great personality, looking for nice guy to share my life with, single dad welcome. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408253

SUSIE, seeks fifty shades of grey with guy any age but must be discreet, call and I will explain why. Tel No: 0905 002 1957 Box No: 407321

HI I'm Pam, cuddly, attractive, self-sufficient, employed, looking for similar young looking, sincere male for hopeful ltr. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407933

FEMALE many interests, seeks male, 40-55 for LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408537

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68YR old lady, likes gardening, meals out, days out, looking for sincere gent to share time with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408413

JENNY single independent attractive lady, tall and leggy, sensual and looking for very special male friend. Only genuine callers pls. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408285

MANDY divorced independent 46yr old single mum, confident, bubbly and social, looking for male companion to share good times and to be there for each other. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407469

CHRIS blue eyed blonde single female, lots of interests, loves travel, beach, nights in/out, looking for mature sincere gent for possible ltr. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407615

ATTRACTIVE female, young 49, 5ft 7ins, blonde hair, blue eyes, slim, genuine, loyal, easygoing, GSOH, seeks tall, handsome male, 40-50 for fun times, friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406135

LITTLE bit nice and definitely a little bit naughty! Imaginative curvy blonde seeks male for kisses and cuddles. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 363428

62YR old female, widowed, small, slim, attractive, kind, outgoing, likes meals out, dancing, holidays, nights in, seeking professional gent. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 394106

CAROL 36, looking for older experienced gent 50-70yrs for fun times only, discretion assured and expected. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 401853

SUE attractive lonely brunette who loves evenings in/out, music, WLTm someone sincere to love and get close to, why not give me a call? Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407021

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NICKY 26 fun single female who has been on her own for too long desperately seeking her Prince Charming, must be tactile and possess the ability to fall in love, Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407485

MICHELLE lonely singleton, fit/slender, passionate, easy-going seeks male to cook for and generally spoil rotten in exchange for great companionship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407501

HEATHER larger than life, cuddly built lady, scrubs up pretty well, employed, OHAC, GSOH, looking for good times with willing male, fun times guaranteed. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407307

TRACY 35yr old blonde petite single mum, WLTm tall male for nights out, text chats and hopefully ltr. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407215

LYN slim size 10, 5ft 9ins, attractive with GSOH, OHAC, employed, WLTm genuine guy who is also looking to put some fun back into life. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407195

DEBS 37yr old professional, outgoing, bubbly, seeking genuine male for good times in/out and just see where it leads. Single dad welcome. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407039

BLONDE blue eyed 72yr old widow, GSOH, young at heart, seeks honest, caring gent of similar age for holidays, weekends away and happy times, friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407113

WHERE have all the genuine men gone? Sue single female who enjoys nights in/out, music, seeks sincere male to enjoy good times and get close to. Pls ring. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407025

PAULA 38 single mum with OHAC, attractive blue eyes, size 14, seeking well built male with GSOH and honest/reliable disposition, looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407029

MEDIUM build female, 66, widow, 5ft 5ins, likes walks, reading, holidays, seeks sincere male. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407003

HI I am Linda a lonely petite mature lady looking for nice caring male up to 65yrs who also has lots of love to give for hopeful relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406715

ANITA petite 33yr old tanned, toned sexy size 10 female with very high drive and lots of energy looking for similar male for adult no strings fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406835

CARING female, likes Indian rock music, concerts, cinema, seeks North Staffs male, 40-55 for friendship/relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406757

LINDA bored housewife wanting to spice things up a bit looking for clean well mannered professional for discreet adult meets. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406705

GOOD looking professional female, 51, enjoys arts, wining/dining, sight seeing, country walks, seeks special male to enjoy great fun with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406765

DONNA 42yrs young separated female who is ready to start dating again, bubbly, attractive, blonde and raring to get going, come on don't keep me waiting! Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406341

ATTRACTIVE lady, GSOH, slim, dark hair, 50's, likes walks, films, art, meals out, seeks male with GSOH and similar interests for friendship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399245

SINGLE curvy female, 5ft 6ins, green eyes, seeks male, 40-50 for fun and more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406015

PAT 67, attractive, likes reading, holidays, seeking female, 65-72 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405985

SHELLEY 48, 5ft 5ins, brunette, seeking discreet relationship with male 48-52 for friendship/companionship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405795

CHRISTINA 38 very pretty petite trainee nurse looking for N/S male companionship to enjoy meals/drinks out, leading to more maybe. Age/looks and status unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405243

BLACK female 32yrs, 38dd, very curvy, sensual and looking for discreet fun with no strings or complications, any age, looks or status. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405269

MARIA petite curvy brunette, into keep fit, running, beauty, looking for nice genuine tall N/S guy with no ties for fun adult companionship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405099

SHAZ 33 easygoing voluptuous black female with lovely smile and personality to match, loves music, keeping fit and looking good, WLTm appreciative guy. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404819

WOMAN 55yrs old, N/S, size 14, likes animals, nature, reading, TV, quiet life, seeks man 45-55, N/S for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404447

WIDOW young hearted 70's, N/S, likes reading, concerts, gardening, meals out, entertaining. WLTm well educated nice male 50-60's for nice times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404177

ELIZABETH 33, curvy attractive blonde, likes walking, socialising, meals out, entertaining. WLTm well educated nice male 50-60's for nice times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403937

SENSUAL cuddly 32yr old professional looking for similar minded discreet male up to 40yrs for 1-2-1 fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404023

48YR old attractive female seeking local fun maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403947

BLONDE attractive educated lady 50, young minded, seeks professional tall male, 45-55 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 391818

JANE attractive, seeking male for fun and friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403807

TINA fun loving single mum who enjoys most things in life, seeking happy guy with GSOH for meals in, dates out, possible romance and adult companionship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403567

CARLA 41, brown hair/eyes, 5ft 2ins, loving, seeking male who likes walks, cinema and romantic meals. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 396127

BLONDE tanned female, trendy, 46, GSOH, likes walks, pubs, nights in, seeks male. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 384852

GAIL 52, blonde hair, 5ft 2ins, likes nights out, seeks N/S male, 50-60 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 402041

LIZ 42, black, divorced, seeking male, 44-54 for kind, sincere, honest, open relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400949

DEBBIE sexy size 14, fun, outgoing, discreet, looking for fun times only with male over 40yrs, call to find out more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 398759

DENISE tall leggy good looking single mum, easygoing, enjoys nights in/out, animals, WLTm tall male for fun times possibly more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 391873

NICKY lonely 39yr old single mum looking for friendship and outings, holidays etc. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399189

RETIREd lady, seeks gent for friendship and outings, holidays etc. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 392936

SARAH 23, attractive, brunette, slim, looking for male for LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 392979

GRACE Jones lookalike, black lady, 53, 5ft 11ins, OHAC, WLTm male, 45-65, 6ft plus for relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397681

CAROLINE attractive, kind, caring, 43, seeking kind, caring male for LTR, 45-50. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 398387

35YR old female, seeks intelligent, down to earth male, 50-75 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 388297

FEMALE looking for gent, 65-70, caring, loving and independent. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 378295

MANDY 36, size 10 but busty, looking for discreet relationship with open-minded man. Status unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 360317

CLAUDIA 37yr old attractive single mum who has been unlucky in love looking for special male to make me feel gorgeous again. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 390991

FRIENDLY outgoing, sociable lady, 34 but looks mid 20's (its true) WLTm adventurous male 18-65, I'm open to most ages/things, happy to try most things. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 355761

TALL curvy female, 36dd, loves music, looking for fun and romance with dark male. Give me a call. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 359238

VIVACIOUS strawberry blonde who knows just what she wants, wants down to earth caring male for spontaneous fun relationship. 35-69. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 366707

KIRSTY 36 attractive, blonde and very bored, seeking open-minded discreet decent male who can accommodate for adult fun friendship, 40-60yrs. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 373013

SUZANNA lovely beautiful classy French lady looking for happy decent reliable very sexy man for lots of TLC and good times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 375711

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LONELY male, 55, seeks Indian/Jamaican female, 25 plus for sincere relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408957

ATTRACTIVE male, 55, seeks older female, 50-70 for close, adult fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397189

MARK 44, 6ft, dark hair, businessman, interesting, seeking sporty female for meals out, day trips, country walks etc. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408571

FUN loving male, 5ft 10ins, slim, GSOH, seeks mature female, 50-65 for meals out and daytime relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408185

JIMMY 53 good looking, fit, genuine, honest, very loving and looking for the same in a woman. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397157

JOHN 59, 5ft 8ins, OHAC, GSOH, seeks lady, 45-55, likes meals out and in. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403273

TIM easygoing honest male, discreet, uninhibited, seeks similar non conformist averagely attractive, N/S female up to 65. Notts. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 375065

GENT 48, youthful outlook, likes countryside, keep fit, karaoke, seeks soul mate for fun times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408411



MATURE land owner, GSOH, youthful outlook, likes countryside, socialising, history, seeks lady who appreciates good food/conversation with view to relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408417

BROADMINDED 42yr old male, GSOH, caring, loving good personality seeks female for fun friendship, relationship and adult fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404623

MATURE male, lonely, no ties, attractive, likes TV, reading, walks, holidays, meals out, seeks attractive, smart female, 65-72 to share simple things in life. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408183

MAURICE Shropshire farmer, 43, seeks farming lady of any age to share the good things in life with view to LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 374021

YOUNG looking 50's male, seeking female for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408177

MALE 58, good looking, placid, seeks honest, loyal, caring female with view to becoming soul mates. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400313

SINGLE male, youthful, serene, seeks similar down to earth non materialistic female to become everlasting soul mates. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407711

CHRIS divorced, 55, smoker, seeks female, 30-45 for lasting relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407715

GENUINE good looking male, 39, WLTm genuine, pretty female, 24-42 for fun and friendship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407753

SHY 60yr old male, seeks genuine female for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407847

32YR old slim, dark haired, adventurous, creative, likes music, cycling and photography, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 352753

JEFF 60's, 6ft 2ins, fit, seeking lady, mid 50-60's for friendship/relationship, nights in/out and good times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407811

ROMANCE wanted in Nuneaton, 5ft 10ins, medium build male, 41, seeking a relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406683

BROADMINDED 67yr old male, fit, active, GSOH, caring, loving, seeks N/S female, open minded, 62-69 for genuine LTR, ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407785

TONY semi retired teacher with lots of interests including sport, theatre, walking, OHAC, WLTm professional female to share interests. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404637

MALE 51, seeks lady to spoil and pamper. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 313191

IAN 5ft 10ins, 55, caring, honest, looking for sincere female with good personality, 45-55, enjoy being out, socialising, meals. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 382997

MALE 41, honest, caring, seeks female, 18-55 for friendship, maybe more, must have GSOH. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407677

ALAN retired professional, well travelled, pleasant lifestyle, seeks slim, attractive, N/S lady, 48-60 for LTR and romance. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407575

ACTIVE 30yr old slim, dark haired male, enthusiastic, likes keep fit, photography, seeks female, 19-32. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 330099

MALE 46, enjoys romantic walks, meals out, seeks female biker for rides out and touring. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407711

KIND caring gent 41, 5ft 11ins, fit, build, WLTm similar lady for friendship, maybe more, likes music, the outdoors and eating out. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404055

What's On!

Soweto Gospel singers visit Alex

GRAMMY Award-winning group Soweto Gospel Choir is celebrating its 10th anniversary with a trip to Birmingham.

The choir will be at the New Alexandra Theatre on November 21 as part of a UK tour.

Over the past 10 years they have collaborated with artists from Stevie Wonder to Robert Plant. They have performed in front of President Bill Clinton, Oprah Winfrey, Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Festive favourites at Symphony Hall

ACTOR Mark Williams, currently starring in Tartuffe at Birmingham Rep, will bring festive fun to the stage this Christmas with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

The Harry Potter and Fast Show actor will join the orchestra and its choirs for Festive Favourites, carols and humorous seasonal stories at the Symphony Hall on December 19 at 7.30pm, December 22 at 3pm and 7.30 and December 23 at 7.30.

Illness forces new date for rock gig

MOTÖRHEAD, the loudest band in rock 'n' roll, have rescheduled their November tour due to frontman Lemmy's illness. The band were due to play the Civic Hall on November 19 but that gig will now take place on February 17, 2014. Tickets for the original date are valid or can be refunded.

Liam's Beady Eye and rising stars getting ready to rock

Beginning to feel a lot like Christmas

WITH tickets selling fast and several performances in Birmingham already sold out, Birmingham Royal Ballet's spectacular production of fairytale The Nutcracker – created by the company's Director Laureate Sir Peter Wright – returns to its home at Birmingham Hippodrome this month.

One of the world's most celebrated family Christmas shows will be danced from Friday, November 22, to Thursday, December 12, at the Hurst Street theatre.

Generosity

Sir Peter created the production about Clara's Christmas adventures in 1990 to thank Birmingham for its generosity towards the company following its move from Sadler's Wells, London.

The Nutcracker immediately triumphed, establishing itself as the finest version in the country during the Christmas calendar of entertainment.



Dance of the Mirlitons in The Nutcracker with Laetitia Lo Sardo as Clara and with Jade Heusen and Nicki Moffatt as the Mirlitons
Picture by Roy Smiljanic

ONE of the most exciting new young London bands of the year, Palma Violets, will kick off their UK tour with a gig at Wolverhampton Slade Rooms on Monday.

The Lambeth four-piece, already creating a major buzz stateside, had a breakthrough appearance on Jools Holland's show earlier this year and won many fans with their debut album 180.

Gallagher

Other major gigs include a Monday Wolverhampton Civic Hall concert by Beady Eye, fronted by Liam Gallagher from Oasis. The band are back in action after guitarist Gem Archer suffered a fractured skull and broken leg in accidents which caused them to pull out of the V Festival. Synth rock veteran Gary Numan brings his machine music to the Wulfrun Hall on Tuesday.

Birmingham's Editors return home for a gig at the O2 Academy on Saturday. The same venue hosts Scouting For Girls on Tuesday.

Mutya, Keisha and Siobhan of The Sugababes have a gig at Digbeth's The Institute tonight (Thursday) and the same venue hosts Naughty Boy tomorrow and Reef on Saturday.

Former Stone Bill Wyman brings his Rhythm Kings to



Palma Violets – Slade Rooms

the Symphony Hall tonight and British R&B greats Jazze B's and Soul II Soul are at the Town Hall on Tuesday. South African jazz legend Hugh Masekela joins pianist Larry Willis at the Town Hall on Saturday.

Sharleen Spiteri's Texas on Monday and Bryan Ferry on Tuesday both have sold out Symphony Hall gigs.

Stourbridge rockers Ned's Atomic Dustbin celebrate their 25th year with a short tour including a gig at Birmingham's O2 Academy on Saturday, November 23.

Monologues get new leading lady

THE Vagina Monologues will be making its return to the West Midlands as part of a nationwide tour.

Eve Ensler's theatrical hit will return to Birmingham's New Alexander Theatre on November 22 with new leading lady Diane Keen, who recently completed a 10-year stint on popular BBC soap Doctors and is making her first return to the stage in more than a decade.

She will be joined by two other soap stars – former Hollyoaks actresses Terri Dwyer and Hollie-Jay Bowes – for the monologues. A proportion of ticket sales from the tour will go towards the international women's charity V-Day, which was established by the show's creator.

Choir and sinfonia cathedral concert

MUSIC lovers can hear Birmingham Royal Ballet's orchestra as part of a special choral event.

The Royal Ballet Sinfonia will be performing at Birmingham's St Philip's Cathedral, under the baton of music director Koen Kessels, at the concert on November 21. They will be joined by the city's Birmingham Cathedral Choir for the concert, starting at 7.30pm.

The orchestra will again collaborate with the choir for Faure's Requiem and Mahler's Symphony Number Four. Tickets are £10, available on 0844 338 0338 or at www.ticketfactory.com

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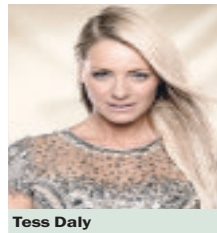


What's On!

SATURDAY'S TV 16.11.13

Listings supplied by Press Association

CHOICE



Tess Daly

Strictly Come Dancing

BBC1, 6.30pm
For those who reckon it's grim up north, brace yourself for a big surprise. This week's edition comes from the Tower Ballroom in Blackpool, and there's nothing miserable about that world famous place. All the stops will be pulled out to impress at Britain's home of ballroom dancing; you can bet that costume designer Vicky Gill will have been working overtime to prepare the most lavish, sequin-laden frocks viewers can imagine with which the nine remaining celebrities will dazzle the crowd. Following a week's break, Bruce Forsyth returns to the show, alongside Tess Daly.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Food & Drink. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **12.45** Saturday Sportsday. **1.00** BBC News: Regional News: Weather. **1.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **2.00** Live International Rugby Union. **4.30** A Question of Sport. (R) **5.00** BBC News: Regional News: Weather. **5.20** Children in Need: The Best Bits.

6.30 **Strictly Come Dancing.** Bruce Forsyth and Tess Daly present from Blackpool Tower Ballroom, where the venue may be different but it will be business as usual as the couples strive to achieve perfection.

8.00 **Atlantis.** The trio are joined by Pythagoras's feisty younger brother Arcas to escort a valuable cargo across the desert with a ramshackle group of strangers.

8.50 **The National Lottery Live.** Chris Evans reveals the results of the Lotto and the Thunderball.

9.00 **Casualty.** Lily suspects steroids are to blame for a violent dispute between rugby players, while a policeman is brought in with a fractured leg after a confrontation at a colleague's funeral.

9.50 **BBC News: Weather.**

10.10 **Film: Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End.** (2007) The swashbuckling rogues join forces with old foe Barbossa to rescue Captain Jack Sparrow from the land of the dead. Fantasy adventure sequel, with Johnny Depp and Geoffrey Rush; National Lottery Update.

12.45 **Film: Highlander: Endgame.** (2000) **2.20** Weatherview. **2.25** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 This is BBC Two. **7.35** **Film: Emergency Call.** (1952) **9.05** **Film: The Journey of Natty Gann.** (1985) Disney adventure, starring John Cusack and Meredith Salenger. **10.40** **Reel History of Britain.** (R) **11.10** **The Life of Birds.** (R) **12.00** **Paul Hollywood's Pies & Puds.** (R) **1.30** **The A to Z of TV Cooking.** **2.15** **EastEnders.** **3.40** **Escape to the Country.** (R) **4.25** **Flog It!** **4.55** **Live International Rugby Union.** Ireland v Australia (Kick-off 5.45pm).

7.30 **Live Rugby League World Cup.** The third quarter-final (Kick-off 8.00pm). Mark Chapman introduces coverage of this evening's fixture at the DW Stadium in Wigan. Subsequent programmes subject to change.

10.00 **QI.** Stephen Fry is joined by Ronni Ancona, Dave Gorman, Lee Mack and regular panellist Alan Davies to answer questions on the theme of all things infantile. (R)

10.30 **Formula 1: United States Grand Prix - Qualifying Highlights.** The key moments from the battle for pole position at the United States Grand Prix, the 18th round of the campaign, held at the Circuit of the Americas in Austin, Texas.

11.45 **Film: Stark Raving Mad.** (2002) A man saddled with his late brother's debts comes up with a scheme to rob a bank - but nothing goes according to plan. Crime comedy, starring Seann William Scott and Timm Sharp.

1.20 **Film: Radio On.** (1979) **3.00** This is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 **CITV:** Babar and the Adventures of Badou. **6.10** **Matt Hatter Chronicles.** (R) **6.35** **Dino Dan.** (R) **6.50** **Dino Dan.** (R) **7.00** **Canimals.** (R) **7.10** **Canimals.** (R) **7.15** **Canimals.** (R) **7.25** **Sooty.** **7.35** **Horrid Henry.** (R) **7.50** **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.** **8.15** **Bottom Knockout Street.** **8.30** **Munch Box.** **9.25** **ITV News.** **9.30** **The Home of Fabulous Cakes.** (R) **10.30** **Murder, She Wrote.** (R) **11.25** **ITV News: Weather.** **11.35** **Surprise Surprise.** (R) **12.40** **You've Been Framed!** (R) **1.10** **Doc Martin.** (R) **2.10** **The X Factor Results.** (R) **3.45** **Film: Star Wars: Episode V - The Empire Strikes Back.** (1980)

6.05 **Regional Programme; Weather.**

6.15 **ITV News: Weather.**

6.30 **New You've Been Framed!** Dogs reveal where they stand on Europe.

7.00 **The Chase: Celebrity Special.** Loose Women's Andrea McLean, football pundit Robbie Savage, Liberty X singer Jessica Taylor and comedian Rory McGrath take on one of the trivia experts.

8.00 **The X Factor.** Dermot O'Leary hosts the Great British Songbook Week, as the remaining acts face increasing pressure to pull out all the stops and impress with note-perfect performances.

9.30 **The Jonathan Ross Show.** With Sarah Millican and One Direction.

10.30 **ITV News: Weather.**

10.45 **Take Me Out.** A guitar teacher, a 999 call operator, a choir leader and a butcher take part. (R)

12.00 **Jackpot247.** **3.00** **The Jeremy Kyle Show USA.** (R) **3.45** **ITV Nightscreen.**

CHANNEL 4

6.00 **The Treacle People.** (R) **6.10** **The Hoobs.** (R) **6.35** **The Hoobs.** (R) **7.00** **Volleyball.** (R) **8.00** **The Morning Line.** **9.00** **The American Football Show.** **10.05** **Fraser.** (R) **10.30** **Everybody Loves Raymond.** (R) **11.00** **The Big Bang Theory.** (R) **11.25** **The Big Bang Theory.** (R) **11.55** **The Simpsons.** (R) **12.25** **Heston's 70s Feast.** (R) **1.30** **Channel 4 Racing.** **4.00** **Come Dine with Me.** (R) **4.25** **Come Dine with Me.** (R) **5.00** **Come Dine with Me.** (R) **5.25** **Come Dine with Me.** (R) **6.00** **Come Dine with Me.** Julia Smith hosts the final party in Mansfield. (R) **6.30** **Channel 4 News.**

7.00 **The Political Slot.** MP James Wharton explains his European Union Referendum Bill.

7.05 **Marvel's Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.** Coulson works the system to save Ward and Fitz. (R)

8.00 **Grand Designs.** Kevin McCloud revisits Lucie Fairweather, who decided to carry on with a project to build an eco-friendly family home in Suffolk after the death of her partner. (R)

9.00 **Film: Black Swan.** (2010) Premiere. A repressed, sheltered ballet dancer is encouraged by a director to explore her darker impulses at the risk of her sanity. Drama, starring Natalie Portman and Mila Kunis.

11.10 **Film: The Deep Blue Sea.** (2011) Premiere. Drama, with Rachel Weisz and Tom Hiddleston.

1.05 **Stand Up for the Week.** Paul Chowdhry hosts the satirical comedy show. (R) **1.50** **Paddy's TV Guide.** (R) **2.35** **Hollyoaks.** (R) **4.40** **90210.** **5.20** **Deal or No Deal.** (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 **Milkshake!** **10.00** **Power Rangers: Megaforce.** **10.35** **Sluggterra.** **11.00** **Inside Hollywood.** **11.05** **Ben Fogle's Animal Clinic.** (R) **12.05** **Stobart: Trucks, Trains & Planes.** (R) **1.05** **Film: The Christmas Card.** (2006) **2.50** **Film: The Town Christmas Forgot.** (2010) **4.30** **Film: A Grandpa for Christmas.** (2007)

6.10 **5 News Weekend.**

6.15 **D-Day: The Ultimate Conflict.** The story of the critical Second World War offensive, profiling the inventors who worked behind the scenes to create an assortment of unusual machines for the Allied landings. (R)

8.00 **JFK's Secret Killer: The Evidence.** Documentary investigating the events during and directly after the shooting of US president John F. Kennedy, revealing a new theory as to the identity of the assassin. (R)

9.00 **Battle Scared: Nightmare on Civvy Street.** Chris Terrill examines why some former soldiers continue to live in a state of hypervigilance, seeing everything and everyone around them as a potential threat.

10.00 **International Boxing.** James DeGale v Dyah Davis. Mark Pougatch presents live coverage of the bout for the WBC Super Middleweight Silver title at Glow in Bluewater, Kent.

12.00 **SuperCasino.** **3.10** **Charley Boorman's Extreme Frontiers.** (R) **4.00** **Wildlife SOS.** (R) **4.25** **Make It Big.** (R) **4.50** **Roary the Racing Car.** (R) **5.00** **Angels of Jarm.** (R) **5.10** **Hana's Helpline.** (R) **5.20** **Angels of Jarm.** (R) **5.30** **The Funky Valley Show.** (R) **5.40** **Roary the Racing Car.** (R) **5.50** **Hana's Helpline.** (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 **Rugby Union 8.00** **Doctor Who: Greatest Monsters and Villains Weekend 11.30** **Family Guy**

BBC Four
7.00 **Frozen Planet 8.00** **Benjamin Britten on Camera 9.00** **Borgen 11.00** **Queen Live in Budapest: Hungarian Rhapsody**

ITV2
3.30 **Film: Kindergarten Cop** (1990) **5.45** **Film: Mr Bean's Holiday** (2007) **7.25** **Film: Evan Almighty** (2007) **9.30** **The Xtra Factor 10.30** **Celebrity Juice 11.20** **Fake Reaction**

ITV3
3.20 **Film: Columbo: A Stitch in Crime** (1973) **4.55** **A Touch of Frost 7.00** **Rosemary & Thyme 8.00** **Foyles War 10.00** **Bomb Girls 11.00** **An Audience with Diana Ross**

ITV4
1.35 **Film: The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp** (1943) **5.00** **Storage Wars 7.00** **I Want That Car 8.00** **Cristiano Ronaldo - Footballing Superstar 9.00** **Film: Born on the Fourth of July** (1989) **Fact-based Vietnam War drama, starring Tom Cruise. 11.55** **Film: Jarhead** (2005)

E4
2.10 **Film: Aliens in the Attic** (2009) **4.00** **Rules of Engagement 5.00** **How I Met Your Mother 6.00** **The Big Bang Theory 7.00** **How I Met Your Mother 7.30** **Suburgatory 8.00** **New Girl 9.00** **Film: Die Hard 4.0** (2007) **Action thriller sequel, with Bruce Willis, Timothy Olyphant, Justin Long and Maggie Q. 11.35** **The Inbetweeners**

Film4
2.45 **CutThroat Island** (1995) **5.05** **Tooth Fairy** (2010) **7.10** **Chalet Girl** (2011) **9.00** **Hot Tub Time Machine** (2010) **Sci-fi comedy, starring John Cusack. 10.55** **Frozen** (2010) **Thriller, starring Emma Bell.**

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What's On!

SUNDAY'S TV 17.11.13

Listings supplied by Press Association

CHOICE



Mandy Patinkin

Homeland

Channel 4, 9pm

In case you didn't know it, this is one of the most talked about, acclaimed American series of recent years. However, maintaining the level of brilliance that captivated audiences in the spring of 2012 is far from easy, but at least the presence of Claire Danes (Carrie), Mandy Patinkin (Saul) and F Murray Abraham (Dar Adal) helps sustain the interest in this episode. While Saul's old adversary is in custody, Berenson takes a career gamble. Meanwhile, Carrie and Quinn have a hard time containing a local police investigation.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **11.00** Sunday Morning Live 2013. **11.00** Sunday Politics. **12.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News: Weather. **1.15** Escape to the Country. (R) **2.15** Points of View. **2.30** Live International Rugby Union. **5.05** Liffeline. **5.15** Songs of Praise. **5.30** BBC News: Regional News: Weather.

6.15 Countryfile. Julia Bradbury reveals how Benjamin Britten was inspired by the Suffolk countryside, and goes looking for wildlife in an unusual place – Sizewell B nuclear power station. Including Weather for the Week Ahead.

7.15 Strictly Come Dancing: The Results. Tess Daly and Claudia Winkleman are at Blackpool Tower Ballroom to reveal which pairs are in the dance-off, and there are performances by JLS and violinist Andre Rieu.

8.00 The Paradise. Tom is furious that Moray's new pocket-watch counter is attracting attention away from his food hall, so he asks Denise to come up with ideas for improving other departments.

9.00 Britain and the Sea. New series. David Dimbleby explores aspects of the country's maritime history, beginning with a look at the history of exploration in Devon and Cornwall. With Eileen MacArthur.

10.00 BBC News: Regional News: Weather.

10.25 Formula 1: United States Grand Prix – Highlights. Action from the penultimate race of the season.

12.25 Weather. **12.30** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 This Is BBC Two. **6.55** Film: The Velvet Touch. (1948) **8.30** Alan Titchmarsh's Garden Secrets. (R) **9.30** Gardeners' World. (R) **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.30** Paul Hollywood's Pies & Puds. (R) **12.15** Paul Hollywood's Pies & Puds. (R) **1.00** Food & Drink. (R) **1.30** Rugby Union. **2.30** Live Rugby League World Cup. **5.00** Flog It! (R)

6.00 JFK: The Final Visit to Britain. The story of US president John F Kennedy's last trip to the UK.

6.30 Days That Shook the World. The assassination of John F Kennedy. (R)

7.00 Coast. Nick Crane travels from London to Belgium. (R)

7.05 Kennedy Home Movies. Life in one of the 20th century's most powerful families. (R)

8.00 Great Continental Railway Journeys. Michael Portillo travels through Scandinavia.

9.00 Africa 2013: Countdown to the Rains. The rains finally arrive and the grazing animals spread out across the valley. Last in the series.

10.00 Respect: A Felix Dexter Special. A tribute to the comedian, who died last month.

10.30 Hebburn. The Pearsons deal with the aftermath of Joe's stroke. (R)

11.00 Never Mind the Buzzcocks. Michael Bolton hosts, with Carol Vorderman, Shane Filan, Seann Walsh and Diana Vickers. (R)

11.30 Rugby League World Cup. Highlights of the quarter-finals.

12.15 Film: More Than Just a Game. (2007) **1.45** Sign Zone: Countryfile. (R) **2.40** Holly City. (R) **3.40** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Babar and the Adventures of Badou. **6.10** Matt Hatter Chronicles. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan. (R) **6.50** Dino Dan. (R) **7.00** Canimals. (R) **7.10** Canimals. (R) **7.15** Canimals. (R) **7.25** Sooty. **7.35** Horrid Henry. (R) **7.50** Victorious. **8.15** Bottom Knockout Street. **8.30** Fort Boyard Ultimate Challenge. **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Storage Hoarders. (R) **10.30** Sunday Side Up. **11.30** Sunday Scoop. **12.30** ITV News: Weather. **12.35** Inside the National Trust. **1.35** Love Your Garden. (R) **2.35** The X Factor. (R) **4.05** Downton Abbey. (R) **5.35** Prize Island. **6.35** Regional Programme: Weather.

6.45 ITV News: Weather.

7.00 Coronation Street. Hour-long episode. Peter steps in when David hassles Tina in the Rovers.

8.00 The X Factor Results. The two acts with the lowest number of public votes face each other in the sing-off, and for one of them the dream of stardom will be over.

9.00 I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here! New series. Ant and Dec present as a fresh batch of famous faces wave goodbye to their lives of luxury and set up camp among the creepy-crawlies of the Australian jungle.

10.30 ITV News: Weather.

10.45 Off Their Rockers. Senior citizens play pranks on the public. (R)

11.15 Anglo-Welsh Cup Rugby Union. Highlights of the second round of pool matches.

12.15 The Store. **2.15** Motorsport UK. **3.05** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.10 The American Football Show. (R) **7.05** FIA GT Blancpain Endurance Season Review. **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.55** The Simpsons. (R) **1.25** Channel 4 Racing. **3.30** Film: Congo. (1995) **5.35** Film: Night at the Museum. (2006) Comedy, starring Ben Stiller.

7.40 Channel 4 News.

8.00 Queen Victoria and the Crippled Kaiser – Secret History. Documentary revealing the secret childhood of Queen Victoria's eldest grandson, the future Kaiser Wilhelm II, through a long-hidden cache of intimate family letters.

9.00 Homeland. Saul takes a career gamble while his old adversary is in custody, and Carrie and Quinn struggle to contain a local police investigation.

10.00 Was It Something I Said? David Mitchell hosts the comedy panel show, with Micky Flanagan and Richard Ayoade joined by Rhod Gilbert and Josie Long in a battle of words. John Craven is tonight's narrator.

10.30 Toast of London. Steven becomes an author of erotic literature.

10.55 Alan Carr: Chatty Man. Russell Brand discusses his new DVD and Adam Hills tells Alan about his debut stand-up show. The Wanted provide the music. (R)

11.55 Fresh Meat. Kingsley dates both Heather and Josie. (R)

12.45 American Football Live. **4.45** KOTV Boxing Weekly. (R) **5.15** Deal or No Deal. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! Peppa Pig. **6.05** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **6.15** Fifi and the Flowertots. (R) **6.25** Bubble Guppies. (R) **6.40** The Mr Men Show. (R) **6.50** Chloe's Closet. (R) **7.00** Roobarb and Custard Too. (R) **7.10** Bananas in Pyjamas. (R) **7.20** Make Way for Noddy. (R) **7.30** City of Friends. (R) **7.45** Little Princess. (R) **7.55** The Adventures of Bottle Top Bill and His Best Friend Corky. (R) **8.15** Angelina Ballerina. (R) **8.30** Rupert Bear. (R) **8.45** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **8.50** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.00** Toby's Travelling Circus. **9.15** Jelly Jam. (R) **9.30** LazyTown. **10.00** Power Rangers: Super Samurai. (R) **10.35** Sluggert. **11.00** The Hotel Inspector. (R) **12.00** Cowboy Builders. (R) **1.00** Police Interceptors. (R) **2.00** Film: Little Nicky. (2000) **3.35** Film: Christmas. (2011)

7.15 5 News Weekend.

7.20 Film: Rush Hour 2. (2001) Action comedy sequel, starring Jackie Chan and Chris Tucker.

9.00 Film: The Book of Eli. (2010) A drifter in post-apocalyptic America battles a despot for control of a book believed to hold the key to mankind's future. Action adventure, with Denzel Washington and Gary Oldman.

11.15 Film: Once Upon a Time in Mexico. (2003) Action thriller, starring Antonio Banderas and Johnny Depp.

1.15 SuperCasino. **3.10** The Gadget Show. (R) **4.00** Wildlife SOS. (R) **4.25** Make It Big. (R) **4.50** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **5.00** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.10** Hana's Helpline. (R) **5.20** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.30** The Funky Valley Show. (R) **5.40** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **5.50** Hana's Helpline. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 Great TV Mistakes **7.30** Doctor Who: Greatest Monsters and Villains Weekend **10.00** Family Guy **10.25** The Revolution Will Be Televised **10.55** American Dad! **11.40** Snow, Sex and Suspicious Parents

BBC Four
7.00 Billy Budd from Glynedebourne **9.45** The Golden Age of the Tram – A Streetcar Named Desire **10.45** The Golden Age of Canals **11.45** When Albums Ruled the World

ITV2
2.25 Film: Ice Age: The Meltdown (2006) **4.15** Film: Peter Pan (2003)

6.25 Film: The Lost World: Jurassic Park (1997) **9.00** The Xtra Factor **10.00** You've Been Framed! **10.30** I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here Now! **11.35** Tricked

ITV3
1.50 Inspector Morse **4.05** Murder, She Wrote **5.05** Film: Columbo: A Stitch in Time (1973) **6.40** Agatha Christie's Poirot **9.00** Lewis **11.00** Blue Murder

ITV4
3.15 Film: 633 Squadron (1964) **5.15** Film: Dunkirk (1958) **8.00** Anglo-Welsh Cup Rugby Union

9.00 Film: Jaws 3 (1983) **11.05** Nicola Adams: Sports Life Stories

E4
4.00 How I Met Your Mother **6.00** The Big Bang Theory **7.30** Rules of Engagement **8.00** Film: Crocodile Dundee (1986) **10.00** Rude Tube **11.00** The Inbetweeners **11.35** Drifters

Film4
3.35 The Mistress of Spices (2005) **5.25** Son of the Mask (2004) **7.20** The Man (2005) **9.00** The Mechanic (2011) Action thriller remake, starring Jason Statham. **10.50** The Naked Gun 3 1/3: The Final Insult (1994) Comedy sequel, starring Leslie Nielsen.

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What's On!

Film Choices

MONDAY

It's a Wonderful Afterlife, BBC1, 11.20pm

An Indian mother is determined to see her daughter married, and turns to murder to accomplish her goals. She finds herself haunted by the spirits of her victims, who can only rest in peace when she dies, while her daughter falls for the policeman investigating the string of suspicious deaths. Supernatural comedy, with Shabana Azmi and Goldy Notay. (2010)

TUESDAY

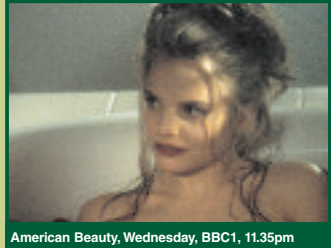
The Girl in the Park, BBC1, 11.45pm

A grieving mother withdraws from her friends and family after her three-year-old daughter disappears in Central Park. Fifteen years later she befriends an 18-year-old con-woman with a chequered past, and begins to believe the troubled teenager could be her own long-lost child. Drama, starring Sigourney Weaver, Kate Bosworth, Alessandro Nivola and David Rasche. (2007)

WEDNESDAY

American Beauty, BBC1, 11.35pm

A suburban family man has a mid-life crisis when he becomes infatuated with a friend of his teenage daughter. Struggling to cope with the unhealthy attention her father is lavishing on her friend, the girl begins a tentative relationship of her own. Meanwhile, her harassed mother is having an affair. Sam Mendes' Oscar-winning black comedy drama, starring Kevin Spacey, Annette Bening, Thora Birch, Mena Suvari and Wes Bentley. (1999)



American Beauty, Wednesday, BBC1, 11.35pm

THURSDAY

King Solomon's Mines, Channel 4, 12.10pm

A rugged soldier of fortune is hired to help a woman find her father, who is missing in the African wilderness. However, during his mission, he gets caught up in the search for a legendary treasure – and must fight for his life against cannibals, the German army and a long-standing foe. Action adventure based on H Rider Haggard's novel, with Richard Chamberlain, Sharon Stone, Herbert Lom and John Rhys-Davies. (1985)

FRIDAY

Lethal Weapon 4, Channel 5, 10pm

Mismatched LAPD detectives Riggs and Murtaugh stumble across a ship transporting Chinese immigrants into the US. As they try to get to the bottom of the organisation behind the smuggling, they find themselves up against a master criminal who is an expert in martial arts and heads a Chinese triad responsible for people-trafficking and forgery. Action adventure sequel, starring Mel Gibson, Danny Glover, Rene Russo, Joe Pesci, Jet Li and Chris Rock. (1998)

Pick of the Week

Jungle fever grips the nation for another year

Admittedly there are plenty of celebrities we'd love to throw in the jungle, never to see a trace of again, but we'll happily settle for the next best thing – sending them Down Under into rat-ridden pits and snake-infested swamps and serving them up a three-course meal of the jungle menu's finest delicacies.

Yes, it's that time of year again when a handful of famous folk ditch their make-up, designer clobber and home comforts – and all in a bid to take the crown as king or queen of the jungle, an accolade clinched last year by actress Charlie Brooks.

Back in 2002, the powers-that-be at ITV first discussed the seemingly absurd idea of taking a handful of headline-grabbing celebrities and throwing them in to the middle of a beastie-inhabited Australian jungle. "I'll never work" cried a groaning public.

But here we are, about to embark on the 13th series of the sadistic reality favourite, which, at a time when reality TV is in overload, I'm a

Celebrity Get Me Out of Here! is head and shoulders above its peers.

As usual ITV bosses are playing their cards close to their chests and keeping us guessing as to who will front this year's final line-up of jungle guests, but with names such as Rylan Clark, Michael Le Vell and Paul Gascoigne being bandied around, perhaps we ought to brace ourselves for what could be the best series yet.

Like a witchetty grub without a side helping of mayonnaise, it'd be criminal if Ant and Dec weren't at the helm plumb the depths of depravity, and so of course they'll bring us more rounds of gossip from the camp.

The duo, who started out on children's drama Byker Grove as PJ and Duncan, have risen through the ranks to become a telly phenomenon, and frankly prime-time ITV wouldn't be the same without them, given that they're at the helm of three of the channels biggest ratings scorers: I'm a Celebrity, Saturday Night Takeaway and of course Britain's Got Talent.

The boys have definitely earned the National Television Award for Best Entertainment Presenters, that they've now won 13 years running. In fact, they should probably start making room on their mantelpiece ahead of the next NTAs in January...

Dec recently reminisced about where it all started, telling Radio Times: "I think Ant and I were ambitious because of where we come from. Both of us are from working-class families on council estates in Newcastle. Growing up in the '80s, there weren't many opportunities. It was tough – how it is today economically and socially is reminiscent of those days. We were so lucky that opportunity came along in the early '90s, and we didn't let it go. That's driven us for the last 20 years."

He adds: "People often ask what the secret of our success is, and I used to put it down to just something that happened, but reflecting on it, I think it's friendship. Ours is a career built on a friendship, not a friendship built on a career."



Ant and Dec present I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here!, Sunday, ITV, 9pm

Best of the Rest

MONDAY

Wild Things with Dominic Monaghan Channel 5, 7pm

We're not sure who first decided to send the Lord of the Rings star off to far-flung corners of the world to encounter weird creatures, but we'd like to shake them by the hand: it's turned out to be an oddly enjoyable experience. Now it's back from a mid-series break, and Dominic is off to Laos in Southeast Asia on a quest to find the giant huntsman spider, which is so rare that only a handful of humans have ever encountered one in the wild. And that's probably just as well, as it's also tremendously venomous. Mind you, he should be ok – after all, he faced down an ent in The Two Towers.

Ripper Street

BBC1, 9pm

A few weeks ago, in the final episode of BBC Two's Peaky Blinders, we saw a character being sprung by his mates from a prison van. Clearly such behaviour was common back in the 'olden days', because a similar event is happening again, this time in Whitechapel. It's Irish dynamite expert Aiden Galvin who makes his escape – and less than a day later, he's up to his old tricks. Galvin sets an explosive device under the bed of MP Cecil Knightly, a very vocal opponent of Home Rule. Initially the police believe the attack to be politically motivated, but Reid sets about delving into Knightly's past, and uncovers evidence that suggests his murder could have been caused by a different issue...

TUESDAY

Last Tango in Halifax BBC1, 9pm

Sally Wainwright's star-strewn Bafta-winning comedy drama returns for a second series tonight, which sees septuagenarian lovers Alan and Celia, played by Derek Jacobi and Anne Reid, make a welcome return to our screens. The story picks up where the first run left off – with Alan regaining consciousness after his heart scare. Which means not only is the wedding back on, but the pair want to tie the knot as soon as possible. Not everyone's love lives are running smoothly, however, and Caroline returns home to find John in bed with Judith. Strong acting and believable dialogue make the whole thing sparkle.

The Sound of Musicals Channel 4, 9pm

If anyone knows how to fill a theatre, it's Cameron Mackintosh. He's the legendary producer who gave us Cats, Les Misérables and The Phantom of the Opera. However, as the second episode of this eye-opening documentary series discovers, that doesn't mean that his revival of the circus spectacular Barnum is guaranteed to be a stress-free success. Meanwhile, first-time producer Amy Anzel may not have quite so dazzling a CV, but it looks like she has managed to bag a big-name director for Happy

Days: A New Musical in the form of Strictly Come Dancing's Craig Revel Horwood. Surely that should guarantee it's not, as Craig would say, a disaster?

WEDNESDAY

Mystery Map

ITV, 8pm

Did ITV miss a trick by not treating us to this new two-part documentary at Halloween? The programme finds Ben Shephard and Julia Bradbury travelling across Britain, investigating mysterious incidents from ghost-sightings to mythical beasts. The first stop on their itinerary of spooky spots is York, where Ben checks into the Gunpowder Inn, said to be haunted by the ghost of the gunpowder plotter himself. Provided he makes it through the night, the presenter will then be travelling on to Rendlesham Forest to investigate reports of UFOs. And if you refuse to believe these stories without evidence, Julia will also be visiting Hampton Court, where it's believed a ghost has been caught on camera.



Mystery Map, Wednesday, ITV, 8pm

THURSDAY

An Adventure in Space and Time BBC2, 9pm

Mark Gatiss is a lucky man. He's a lifelong Doctor Who fan who's written for the series and even played a villain in one episode, but for many years he harboured the desire to pen a drama about the show's origins, one that would take viewers back to the early 1960s when Canadian TV executive Sydney Newman decided that his employers at the BBC really needed a children's series about an old man who could travel the universe in a battered old police box. Proving that dreams really do come true, Gatiss was commissioned to write that very programme – and here's the results.

FRIDAY

Me, You and Doctor Who: A Culture Show Special BBC2, 9.30pm

Unless you've been travelling the universe, possibly in a blue police box, for the past year, you can't have failed to notice that Doctor Who is celebrating its 50th anniversary on November 23rd. The BBC, which didn't always back the show during its original run, has really pushed the boat out for what is now its flagship drama, treating fans not only to a feature-length adventure on the day of the anniversary itself, but also a variety of documentaries. The latest is this offering presented by lifelong fan Matthew Sweet, who examines the show's appeal while offering insights into how it's influenced musicians, designers and artists. Mark Ravenhill, Caitlin Moran, Kevin Livingstone and various actors who've played the Time Lord offer their opinions too.

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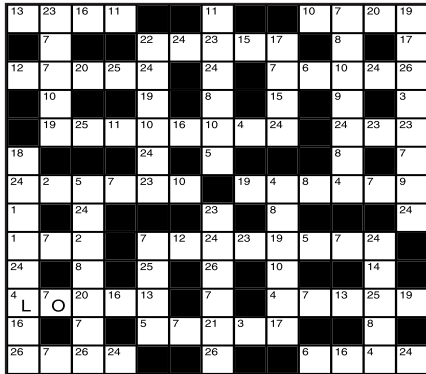
Puzzler

Brain Gym

No.247

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

W	H	V	L	G	C	T	Z	N	M	B	S	O
U	P	E	J	A	D	I	R	Y	F	Q	K	X

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

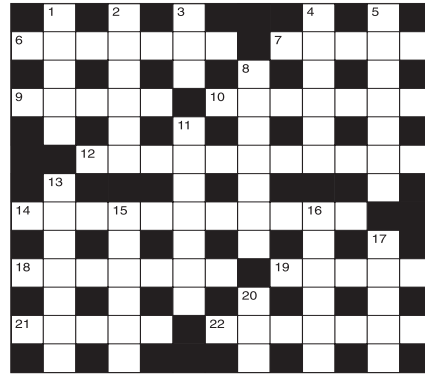
Cryptic Clues:

Across

6. Fired with real reform and no exaggeration (7)
7. Play with spirit on the street (5)
9. Way the French follow an animal home (5)
10. Change course when the vessel's caught in the swell (4,3)
12. There may be many calls on it to change the management (11)
14. Transporting teams, but not impartially apparently (6,5)
18. Ponders about how to react (7)
19. To sack, or to fire (5)
21. Sleep soundly (5)
22. Main pastime of many (7)

Down

1. My goodness! I type wrongly (5)
2. Hue and cry to begin with (6)
3. Gently knock over the kitchen sink (3)
4. Sing to get a drink (6)
5. Reports from the front? (7)
8. It's a bloomer if such a change is made (7)
11. Producing some scaffolding (7)
13. How two halves unite (4,3)
15. Little devil with the skill to communicate (6)
16. In a bad way (6)
17. A growing swindle (5)
20. Second thoughts about a dance step (3)



Quick Clues:

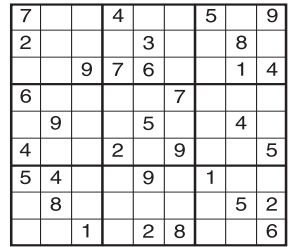
Across

6. Protection (7)
7. Sham (5)
9. Lukewarm (5)
10. Child's room (7)
12. Slow down (6,5)
14. Moulded paper pulp (6-5)
18. Stupid (7)
19. Yet (5)
21. Sky-blue (5)
22. Contrary (7)

Down

1. Crowbar (5)
2. Edit (6)
3. Perform (3)
4. Idle talk (6)
5. Dispute (7)
8. Burial procession (7)
11. Stream (7)
13. To upset (7)
15. Disregard (6)
16. Loathing (6)
17. Near (5)
20. Uneven (3)

Sudoku



Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

7	2	6	3	4	1	9	5	8
8	9	5	6	7	2	3	4	1
4	3	1	9	5	8	6	2	7
3	8	4	1	2	5	7	9	6
9	5	2	7	6	3	1	8	4
6	1	7	4	8	9	5	3	2
5	4	9	2	1	6	8	7	3
1	7	8	5	3	4	2	6	9
2	6	3	8	9	7	4	1	5

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Traffic jam; 7 Ideal; 8 Uniform; 10 Currents; 11 Tilt; 13 Reduce; 15 Pass on; 17 Knit; 18 Entrance; 21 Satiated; 22 Exile; 23 Dramatists. Down: 1 Their; 2 Alliance; 3 Founts; 4 Clip; 5 Agonies; 6 Disc brakes; 9 Malingering; 12 Fairness; 14 Drifter; 16 Intent; 19 Nails; 20 Palm. QUICK - Across: 1 Deportment; 7 Trial; 8 Maligns; 10 Entailed; 11 Tear; 13 Debate; 15 Fasten; 17 Nazi; 18 Sentient; 21 Earnest; 22 Enthusiasm; 23 Restlessly. Down: 1 Drift; 2 Palliate; 3 Romped; 4 Male; 5 Neglect; 6 Attendance; 9 Strengthen; 12 Vestress; 14 Bizarre; 16 Settle; 19 Essay; 20 Bent.



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For most visitors the highlight will be a full day's game drive that brings the chance to see the sweeping savannah and muddy waterholes lined with animals, and to marvel at the incredible 150 mammal and 500 bird species that live in the Kruger National Park, including the 'big five': elephant, lion, rhino, leopard and buffalo. Rooms are reserved at the three-star superior Hippo Hollow Country Estate, located in the midst of lush forest on the banks of the Sabie River. It's open-air terrace overlooks the grounds and river, so watch out for the hippos!

Those interested in history will be intrigued by the visit to Zululand, passing through Swaziland en route, to reach the haunting battlefields of Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift. In 1879 these two battles, just a day apart, became a defining moment for the British Empire and the specialist Zulu guide will make those desperate encounters come alive.

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In the past few years Vietnam has opened its doors to the world and much has changed. Today, in one of the world's last communist countries, the motorcycles and western dress of the youth happily co-exist with orange-clad Buddhist monks and political posters from a different era.

On this 16-day tour you will visit Hue, one of the country's most beautiful small towns and the former imperial capital. Here you will be able to see the amazing Citadel and its imperial Forbidden City, as well as the magnificent seven-storied Thien Mu pagoda, a working Buddhist shrine.

Contorted by years of erosion, explore the staggeringly beautiful rock formations of Halong Bay, a UNESCO World Heritage site from on board a converted Chinese junk. Then in Saigon you will be taken on a visit to the Cu Chi tunnels, a complex underground network which provided a base for the Vietcong from which to attack US forces. You will see the tunnels themselves and examples of the many mantraps and stake pits which protected them.

The overwhelming image of Vietnam is that of a country blessed with extraordinary beauty and the friendly Vietnamese always courteous and proud to show of their wonderful country.

In Cambodia you can experience the haunting soft morning light rise over the eerie temples of Angkor. Then later discover the huge fortified 13th century city of Angkor Thom, with its five monumental gates, and 300ft wide moat - its centre containing one of Angkor's most remarkable sites, the temple of Bayon.

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- Visits to the major sights of Vietnam and Cambodia
- Guided tours of Hanoi, Hue and Saigon
- Cruise aboard a converted Chinese junk visiting caves and grottoes at Halong Bay
- Visit the Cu Chi tunnels in Saigon
- Full-day cruise along the mighty Mekong River delta
- Visit the ancient city and temples of Angkor, Cambodia
- Guided tour of Phnom Penh
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

* varies according to departure dates please go to website for the latest availability and prices

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BARTLEY GREEN, Trimmerley Road £695 pcm - Fees
A must see! Modern 3 bedroom semi-detached property in a large corner position. Hall, downstairs cloak, newly fitted wooden flooring throughout, fitted kitchen/breakfast bar, good sized lounge with doors leading to large rear garden. 2 double bedrooms & 1 single. Family bathroom with white suite. Driveway and rear parking for up to 6 cars. EPC: B



ROWLEY REGIS, Admirals Way £650 pcm - Fees
A very well presented unfurnished detached house, set within a quiet cul-de-sac. Featuring gas central heating, living room, separate dining room, fitted kitchen, 3 bedrooms, house bathroom with shower, front & rear gardens, garage & driveway parking. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Lydate Road £650 pcm - Fees
Located in the popular area of Howley Grange, is this newly decorated and carpeted semi-detached house. Ideal for Howley Grange Primary School, briefly featuring 3 bedrooms, small kitchen, separate utility area, 2 reception rooms, shower room, double glazing, gas central heating, driveway and garage, small rear garden. EPC: C



ROWLEY REGIS, Pear Tree Drive £650 pcm - Fees
Situated in a quiet cul-de-sac and close to the M5. This modern unfurnished detached house comprises of 1 reception room, fitted dining/kitchen, downstairs wc, gas central heating, double glazing, 3 bedrooms, house bathroom, master bedroom with en-suite, garage and driveway parking, gardens. EPC: C



HALESOWEN, Brett Young Close £599 pcm - Fees
Beautifully presented and in the centre of Halesowen. This lovely apartment is on the ground floor and features 2 double bedrooms, master bedroom with en-suite, house bathroom, large open plan lounge/kitchen with integrated appliances, 1 allocated parking space, available 01/12/13. EPC: B



CRADLEY HEATH, Mary Macarthur Drive £595 pcm - Fees
Set in a lovely quiet cul-de-sac close to Cradley Heath Town Centre, train station close by and buses. This 3 bedroom semi-detached house features 2 reception rooms, fitted kitchen with appliances, downstairs wc, house bathroom with shower, lovely rear garden, drive parking and garage. EPC: B/C



HALESOWEN, Wiltshire Drive £575 pcm - Fees
Located on the Homer Hill Estate. A well presented semi-detached home briefly featuring 3 bedrooms with fitted wardrobes, spacious lounge, dining room, family bathroom with shower, double glazing, gas central heating, front and rear gardens, unfurnished. EPC: D



NETHERTON, Purlin Wharf £550 pcm - Fees
A very presentable, unfurnished ground floor apartment on this popular development, ideally located for canal walks, this property features 2 double bedrooms, master with en-suite, spacious lounge, modern fitted kitchen, family bathroom with white suite, double glazing, electric heating, 1 allocated parking space. Viewing highly recommended. EPC: B/C



CRADLEY HEATH, Harcourt Road £550 pcm - Fees
Unfurnished 3 bedroom mid-terraced house within walking distance to Old Hill Train Station and local shops. Featuring 2 reception rooms, modern fitted kitchen, large rear garden and off road parking for 2 vehicles. Gas central heating, double glazed throughout. Available immediately. EPC: B/C



OLDSWINFORD, Hall Street £550 pcm - Fees
A quaint mid-terraced house, close to local shops and transport links, comprising of 1 double bedroom, 1 single bedroom, fitted kitchen with white goods, downstairs bathroom with shower, spacious lounge, small rear garden, double glazing, gas central heating, on road parking. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Bloomfield Street North £540 pcm - Fees
Extremely well presented and surprisingly large end terrace with off road parking. Within walking distance to Halesowen, local bus routes and shops, comprises 2 bedrooms, nice lounge, attractive fitted diner/kitchen with white goods excluding washing machine, utility room, house bathroom with shower. Is glorious courtyard garden and gated driveway. EPC: E



BRIERLEY HILL, Golden Cross Way £525 pcm - Fees
Set within a quiet cul-de-sac. This modern unfurnished mid terrace house, close to local amenities and Merry Hill featuring 2 double bedrooms, spacious lounge, fitted kitchen, downstairs wc, gas central heating, double glazing, bathroom with shower, 2 parking spaces, low maintenance rear garden. EPC: C



WORDSLEY, Cooknell Drive £525 pcm - Fees
A 2 bedroom semi-detached house recently fully refurbished on the Timberlee Estate. This house comprises of a front reception room, spacious rear lounge, fitted kitchen, house bathroom with shower, gas central heating, double glazing, front and rear gardens, on road parking. EPC: C



OLDSWINFORD, Heath Lane £515 pcm - Fees
Ideally located in the centre of Oldswinford for shops, transport links and Mary Stevens Park. This large and spacious end terrace house features 3 good size bedrooms, 2 reception rooms, downstairs bathroom, fitted kitchen, enclosed rear garden and on road parking. EPC: B/C

**NEW PRICE**

HALESOWEN, Hope Street £495 pcm - Fees
A fully refurbished ground floor apartment having spacious lounge, refitted kitchen with integrated electric oven and hob, 3 bedrooms, refitted bathroom and newly fitted carpets. The apartment has a garage and gardens to front and rear, full double glazing and gas central heating. EPC: D



CRADLEY HEATH, Coppice Road £495 pcm - Fees
A 2 bedroom semi-detached house recently fully refurbished on the Timberlee Estate. This house comprises of a front reception room, spacious rear lounge, fitted kitchen, house bathroom with shower, gas central heating, double glazing, front and rear gardens, on road parking. EPC: C



HALESOWEN, Banners Street £495 pcm - Fees
A mid terrace property which has been refurbished comprises of 2 double bedrooms, brand new fitted kitchen, 2 reception rooms, white bathroom suite with shower, gas central heating, double glazing, large tiered garden with decking area, on road parking. EPC: E



NETHERTON, Round Street £475 pcm - Fees
Set in a quiet road, is this lovely semi-detached home. Featuring gas central heating, living room, fitted kitchen, 1 double and 1 single bedroom, bathroom with shower, rear garden and driveway parking for 2 cars, unfurnished. Popular residential street close to Netherton High Street. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Hagley Road £450 pcm - Fees
An immaculately presented ground floor 1 bedroom flat within walking distance to Halesowen Town Centre. Featuring an open plan living room/modern fitted kitchen with integrated fridge/freezer and washing machine, bathroom with shower over bath, allocated parking space, unfurnished. Available now. EPC: C



DUDLEY, Southgate Way £425 pcm - Fees
A stunning and spacious well presented unfurnished top floor apartment featuring 1 double bedroom and 1 single bedroom, electric storage heating, double glazing, open plan living room with fitted kitchen, house bathroom with shower, allocated parking space. Viewing highly recommended. Available now. EPC: B

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Contact Connells at Halesowen branch for information. Telephone 0121 550 6465.

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THIS particularly well-presented semi-detached property, right, provides spacious accommodation is situated in a popular residential area conveniently close to amenities including shops, schools and public transport services.

The property in Eve Lane, Upper Gornal, is within two miles of Sedgley centre. On the market for £141,995, this centrally heated and double glazed home has been well-maintained throughout and must be seen to be appreciated.

The family size property benefits from a range of noteworthy features including an en suite shower room to the master bedroom, spacious loft conversion/bedroom, a useful study area off the landing, garage and a pleasant garden to the rear.

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Motoring

On right Trax with little Chevrolet

CHEVROLET'S little Trax is yet another fun and fashionable small crossovers model that also aims to be versatile, capable and practical too.

It's a likeable little slice of Americana in this growing segment, writes Andy Enright.

All-purpose SUVs come in many shapes and sizes these days. Everything from large, sturdy rock-hoppers to, well, something like this, Chevrolet's small SUV/crossover model, the Trax.

The Trax, like its near-identical design stablemate the Vauxhall Mokka, offers a trendier and more affordable way for a small, fashionable family to get a foothold in the growing soft roading market segment.

All so-called 'crossover' models claim to do that, be they cars like Nissan's Qashqai or Peugeot 3008 that are based on family hatchbacks. Or more compact models like Nissan's Juke or Skoda's Yeti, based on smaller superminis. The Trax sits in the smaller of these two crossover categories but offers a bit more power and space than you'll find in many of its direct rivals.

It's certainly a more interesting alternative to that Focus-sized family hatch you may have been considering. But does it really stack up as a realistic day-to-day family choice? Let's find out.

Options

This Chevy isn't quite as sharp and wieldy as a rival Nissan Juke, the steering's a little vague for that. It also has a rather firm ride which robs it of the kind of 'big SUV' polish you get in, say, a comparable Skoda Yeti.

Having said all that, what the Trax can offer is a decent compromise between these two extremes that I'd expect will adequately satisfy most potential buyers.

There are three main engine options, the most affordable, as ever, being the least desirable of the trio, the 2WD-only 115PS petrol 1.6-litre variant. A better bet for petrol people is the 140PS 1.4-litre turbo which is more efficient, quicker, has a better 6-speed manual gearbox and is offered with a four wheel drive option. Diesel buyers get two or four wheel drive mated with a 130PS 1.7 VCDi unit.

The AWD system is one of those fully adaptive set-ups that reacts to the surface you're



The Chevrolet Trax is a fun and fashionable addition to the crossover segment

driving over. So there are no knobs and levers: just a set of sensors that constantly monitor things like your steering angle, the wheel speeds, the throttle pedal position and the engine revs.

Based on all this data, the electronic torque transfer device that controls the whole set-up will always know when extra traction is required, at which point it will automatically and seamlessly send up to 50 per cent of the engine's torque from the front to the rear axle.

The Trax is a confident-looking thing with a front end dual port grille that instantly marks it out as a Chevrolet, complete with trademark centre-positioned bow tie badge. Take a seat inside and there's a slightly curious combined LCD and analogue instrument display but a cleanly styled centre console dominated by a multi-function MyLink infotainment screen. This enables you to link in your phone and download videos and various apps.

In the back, there's more space than you'd perhaps expect from something based on a car from the Fiesta class, especially when it comes to headroom. The rear seat row also incorporates a 230V three-pin mains power supply, ideal for game-minded kids. As for luggage space, well, there's no high boot lip to negotiate and beyond it lies 356-litres of carriage room. Push forward the split-folding rear bench and

the Trax really is spacious, offering a total capacity of 785-litres or 1,370-litres if you load above the windowline. There's 1.5m of loadbay length and if that isn't enough, then the front passenger seat can fold flat and enable objects of nearly 2.3m long to be carried. In other words, this car is a lot more versatile than it might look.

Pricing lies mainly in the £16,000 to £21,000 bracket. Within that, there's a £750 premium for petrol buyers who want to make the jump from the entry-level 115PS 1.6 to a comparably-trimmed version of the pokier and more efficient 140PS 1.4T.

Alarm

The sole diesel variant, the 130PS 1.7 VCDi, starts at around the £19,000 mark, which if you're interested is around £700 more than a comparable petrol 1.4T. Both the diesel and the top petrol variant get the option of AWD for a further £1,500 and buyers of the front-driven diesel can also specify a 6-speed automatic gearbox for a £1,000 premium.

Even the base LS variant comes with 16-inch alloy wheels, auto headlamps, daytime running lights, front foglamps, privacy glass, roof rails, power front windows, reverse parking sensors, a Thatcham Category 1 alarm, air conditioning, cruise control, a trip computer, Bluetooth



The cleanly styled centre console dominated by a multi-function MyLink infotainment screen

phone compatibility, steering wheel controls for a decent quality 6-speaker CD stereo with MP3, USB and Aux-in compatibility and Hill Start Assist to stop you from drifting backwards on uphill junctions.

Most of the range though is built around the much plusher LT spec, recognisable by its larger 18-inch alloy wheels, skid plates and special door sills. The key interior addition is Chevrolet's innovative MyLink Connected Radio system with its 7-inch colour touch-screen display and Siri speech recognition.

As far as cost of ownership is concerned, it would be fair to call this Trax class competitive. As you'd expect these days, a start/stop system is fitted across the range (though only on manual gearbox models) to cut the engine when you don't need it, stuck in traffic or waiting at the lights. As a result, even the oldest engine in the line-up, the 115PS 1.6-litre petrol unit, returns 43.4mpg on the combined cycle and 153g/km of CO₂. As for the 140PS 1.4-litre petrol turbo Trax model, well despite the extra power and weight on offer, the figures are actually a bit better, even if you specify your car with AWD.

In that form, the car returns 44.1mpg on the combined cycle and 149g/km of CO₂. Get the 1.4T model with front wheel drive and the respective figures improve to 47.1mpg and

139g/km. Stacking up even better of course is the Trax in 1.7-litre VCDi 130PS diesel form. This manages 62.7mpg on the combined cycle and 120g/km of CO₂ or 57.6mpg and 129g/km in AWD form. Bear in mind though, that specifying a 2WD diesel Trax with automatic transmission will exact a heavy penalty, hitting your fuel and CO₂ figures by around 15 per cent.

This car won't take you through the Serengeti but it'll bring slightly more of a sense of adventure to the school run and makes an appealing second car family choice. Of course you could say the same of most contenders in this segment, full of rivals with obvious virtues.

Better

But this Chevrolet has a few notable selling points of its own, with a decent set of engines, clever infotainment technology and an appearance that's pure, concentrated American SUV.

There are downsides of course, but they're not game-changing ones. It could be better to drive but it's good enough in this respect for most in its target market.

It could be slightly cheaper to buy but Chevy dealers should be able to help you on that one. Which leaves us with what? A model with an appeal that builds as your interest in it grows. And the latest staging post in Chevrolet's SUV history, a car very much of its time.

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*Model shown is a Trax 1.6 LT priced at £17,495 OTR. Vehicle shown features metallic paint at an extra cost of £445. Price correct at time of print.

Official Government Environment Data. Fuel consumption figures mpg (litres/100km) and CO₂ emissions (g/km). Chevrolet Trax Range: Urban 34.4 (8.2) – 52.3 (5.4), Extra Urban 50.4 (5.6) – 70.6 (4.0), Combined 43.4 (6.5) – 62.7 (4.5) CO₂ emissions 153 – 120g/km. Official EU-regulated test data are provided for comparison purposes and actual performance will depend on driving style, road conditions and other non-technical factors.

Motoring

No surprises in sight for used car market at end of this year

REDUCED VALUES and increased supply have set the scene for a used car market "soft landing" toward the end of the year, according to CAP Automotive.

The market seems to be repeating the pattern seen last year, when the market slowed more gently than in the past, with no sign of any shocks on the horizon, CAP experts believe.

Black Book Live, the award-winning real-time car valuation trending tool published by CAP Automotive, identifies cars over four-and-a-half years old as one of the main areas of increased supply. This is fuelling complaints among dealers that high mileages and poor condition are an increasing problem in the search for quality retail stock.

But even values of older, lower quality cars are not sliding steeply, thanks to on-going retail demand, which leaves dealers with little choice other than to keep stocking forecourts.

Closing

Derren Martin, Senior Editor of Black Book Live – which monitors market price movements daily – said: "The window of consumer demand is slowly closing as we move through the final quarter, so dealers who are in the market for stock are exercising more caution around bidding prices at auction."

"We have therefore seen conversion rates at auction slip from over 80 per cent at this point in September to around the 65 per cent mark a month later."

"This reflects the increasing volumes of cars and, in particular, cars that would not be everyone's first choice to purchase for stock. Part of this increase comes from September retail part-exchanges that were not attractive enough to franchise dealers to put on their own forecourts. These are now washing through the market, along with ex-rental vehicles and ex-demonstrators."

"Because retail demand remains good for the time of year, dealers are therefore reluctantly buying these cars and absorbing the cost of reconditioning them. Retailers still need to fill their forecourts, so buying those older cars has become a reluctant necessity."

Derren Martin is also quick to reassure the market that the temporary increase in volume shows no sign of becoming a serious problem of oversupply that could depress values significantly.

He said: "There are over two million fewer used cars in the marketplace than before the recession, so there is no imminent threat of a return to the days of severe oversupply."

"We are also seeing early signs of dealers across all segments building stock levels for January, as they tend to turn



Derren Martin, senior editor of Black Book Live a blind eye to used vehicle stock turn at this time of year. Demand is traditionally high amongst consumers post-Christmas and some switched on sellers will be starting their January sale from Boxing Day.

"The days of clearing the decks for the year-end accounts are certainly over for many."

"With a soft landing predicted for quarter quarter, this also makes any dramatic increases in values less likely as we enter the New Year."

"In short, the market remains fairly robust and we foresee no unpleasant shocks in the short to medium term."

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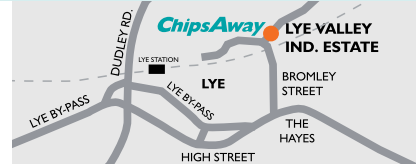
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KEITH TERENCE EMERY (Deceased)

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of 18 Hightown Halesowen B63 2TP, who died on 20/08/2013, are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned on or before 24/01/2014, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice.

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10 Personals

personal

CAN ANYONE HELP?

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Please contact Michael at Box Number P18905, Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

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Warm hearted, independent female, mid 50's, WLTM George Clooney's (non smoking) twin Brother, recent photograph appreciated.

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5ft 6, fit, attractive, trustworthy, slim, kind, non smoker.

Seeking a really nice caring lady, age unimportant.

Photo would be appreciated and returned.

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Car owner preferred.

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TO A GENTLEMAN, LATE 70'S.
I am a sincere, outgoing lady, who enjoys life and young at heart and WLTM genuine, honest gentleman with a good sense of humour, smart dresser, for company, friendship, outings. All letters answered, a photo would be nice and returned. Car owner please, West Midlands area.

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MARIA gorgeous outgoing bubbly 27, good fun, caring, romantic, looking for that special someone to share life with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408893

KIM attractive single lady new to area looking for meet new friends and maybe a new love interest. I have many hobbies and am interesting to know, pls call me. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408489

ANNA, busty mature lady seeks no strings discreet meetings with male any age or location. Tel No: 0905 002 1961 Box No: 408093

TAYLOR attractive very busty curvy black female looking for fun times with open-minded male who is also looking for fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408311

BETHANY 25yr old blonde, slim size 10 with great personality, looking for nice guy to share my life with, single dad welcome. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408253

SUSIE, seeks fifty shades of grey with guy any age but must be discreet, call and I will explain why. Tel No: 0905 002 1961 Box No: 407321

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FEMALE many interests, seeks male, 40-55 for LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408537

28YR old female, seeking male with GSOH for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408639

SUE 40's female who enjoys evenings in/out looking for someone to have some fun and hopefully get close to, go on, give me a ring. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407019

68YR old lady, likes gardening, meals out, days out, looking for sincere gent to share time with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408413

JENNY single independent attractive lady, tall and leggy, sensual and looking for very special male friend. Only genuine callers pls. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408285

MIXED divorced independent 46yr old single mum, confident, bubbly and social, looking for male companion to share good times and to be there for each other. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407469

CHRIS blue eyed blonde single female, lots of interests, loves travel, beach, nights in/out, looking for mature sincere gent for possible ltr. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407615

ATTRACTIVE female, young 49, 5ft 7ins, blonde hair, blue eyes, slim, genuine, loyal, easygoing, GSOH, seeks tall, handsome male, 40-50 for fun times, friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406135

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LYN slim size 10, 5ft 9ins, attractive with GSOH, OHAC, employed, WLTM genuine guy who is also looking to put some fun back into life. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407195

DEBS 37yr old professional, outgoing, bubbly, seeking genuine man for good times in/out and just see where it leads. Single dad welcome. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407039

CAROL 36, looking for older experienced gent 50-70ys for fun times only, discretion assured and expected. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 401853

SUE attractive lonely brunette who loves evens in/out, music, WLTM someone sincere to love and get close to, why not give me a call? Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407021

CURVY Irish female 35yrs looking for fun, frolics, weekends away and lots of excitement with reliable male, discretion assured. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407603

SLIM active lady, 60's, N/S, seeks honest, kind, single, 57-62 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407693

ANNABELLA board attractive 30 something nurse wanting healing hands for no strings fun. No TLC required. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407449

NICKY loving caring gorgeous fun young lady who loves swimming, dancing and lots more, seeking male for text chats and fun times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407459

BLACK female, 45, seeking older gent, 60 plus who knows how to look after a lady. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407787

PAM 71, feels younger, lots to give, socialising, theatre, country walks, charity work, seeking male to share interests with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407851

ATTRACTIVE male, 55, seeks older female, 50-70 for close, adult fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397189

SHY 60yr old male, seeks genuine female for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407847

MATURE land owner, GSOH, youthful outlook, likes countryside, socialising, seeks lady who appreciates good food/conversation with view to relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408417

BROADMINDED 42yr old male, GSOH, caring, loving good personality seeks female for fun friendship, relationship and adult fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404623

MATURE male, lonely, no ties, attractive, likes TV, reading, walks, holidays, meals out, seeks attractive, smart female, 65-72 to share simple things in life. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 374021

MALE 58, good looking, placid, seeks honest, loyal, caring female with view to becoming soul mates. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400313

SINGLE male, youthful, serene, seeks similar down to earth non materialistic female to become everlasting soul mates. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407711

CHRIS divorced, 55, smoker, seeks female, 30-45 for lasting relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407715

GENUINE good looking male, 39, WLTM genuine, pretty female, 24-42 for fun and friendship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407753

32YR old slim, dark haired, adventurous, creative, likes music, cycling and photography, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 352753

JEFF 60's, 6ft 2ins, fit, seeking lady, mid 50-60's for friendship/relationship, nights in/out and good times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407811

ROMANCE wanted in Nuneaton. 5ft 10ins, medium build male, 41, seeking a relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406683

BROADMINDED 67yr old male, fit, active, GSOH, caring, loving, seeks N/S female, open minded, 62-69 for genuine LTR. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407785

TONY semi retired teacher with lots of interests including sport, theatre, walking, OHAC, WLTM professional female to share interests. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404637

MALE 51, seeks lady to spoil and pamper. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 31

Heathens gathering to top off big season

DUDLEY Heathens will bring the curtain down on a stunning season with their awards night in Brierley Hill on Friday.

Club chiefs are keen to stress the evening is a complete sellout in the Earls Suite at the Copthorne Hotel with more than 400 people expected.

The National League champions, who also won the Knockout Cup, Fours, Pairs and Shield, will take to the stage to be presented with medals by world champion Tai Woffinden on what is sure to be an emotional night.

Chairman Nigel Pearson said: "This is going to be a very special evening and we are very pleased to be taking the event to the Copthorne Hotel, adjacent to the Merry Hill Centre."

"I feel sorry for those disappointed people who have missed out on a ticket, we did our best to update fans on ticket sales regularly."

The new brochure 'Heathens 2013... the History Makers' will be launched on the night for £5. Fans are urged to get there early if possible for a prompt 8pm start.

Win puts girls into last eight

Halas Hawks Girls 3 Knowle Girls 2

HALAS Hawks U-16 girls made it through to the last eight of the Birmingham County Cup after beating Knowle Girls 3-2.

Halas took a comfortable two-goal lead through Amy Blakemore, but Knowle fought back to make it 2-2 at the break. In a hard fought second half, which could have gone either way, it was Blakemore again who popped up to get the winner.

Halas Hawks Ladies 11 B'ham Medics 0

Halas Hawks Ladies had a crushing 11-0 win against a depleted Birmingham Medics in the Birmingham County Ladies League Cup.

Lauren Pearson proved outstanding on the right wing, assisting several goals and scoring four.

She was ably supported by Sarah Hayden, who scored a double hat-trick, and Tash Berry, who completed the scoring.

Clarke faces first fight of boxing future



Lennox Clarke

HALESOWEN'S Lennox Clarke makes his professional boxing debut this week hoping it will be the start of a better, brighter future.

It's been a whirlwind 12 months for the likeable Halesowen super middleweight.

This time last year Clarke needed an outlet. Somewhere to channel his aggression. He found boxing.

Clarke made his way to Roy Skeldon's Black Country Boxing Gym and was an instant hit.

He started competing in 'white collar fights', knocking opponents out on a regular basis. He enjoyed the buzz and began sparring with a

Boxing

few professional boxers, including Kevin McCauley. The Stourbridge welterweight was impressed with what he saw and advised Clarke, now 22, to turn pro.

"It's strange to think that this time last year I'd never even laced a pair of gloves," Clarke told www.uko-boxing.com.

"I was getting into a bit of trouble and needed something to focus my mind. I was always fighting, so I thought I'd give boxing a go."

"I enjoyed it and when I started

doing the white collar boxing, I was stopping opponents regularly. I started doing a bit of sparring with a few pros like Ricky Summers and then Kevin McCauley.

"I used to have some right tear-ups with Kev and he said to me one day 'Len, you should really think about going pro now'. I respect him, so took his advice. I'm hoping it will be the best decision I've ever made and the start of a better life."

After seven white collar fights and seven wins, all by knockout, Clarke made his way to Errol Johnson's Wednesbury Boxing Academy just two months ago. Instantly

impressed by what he saw, Johnson added Clarke to his Double Trouble 2 bill, which takes place on this Saturday, November 16 at Walsall Town Hall.

The 22 year-old debuts against veteran Congo-born fighter, Didier Blanch (1-10). Clarke is relishing the prospect of proving himself on the professional stage.

Tickets, priced at £30 and £60 Ringside, are available from Walsall Town Hall Box Office on 0845 111 2900.

The top of the 'Double Trouble 2' bill sees Cradley's Chris Male takes on Coventry's Troy James.

Swimmers strive but can't get 2nd spot

National League Round 2 Worcester

Boldmere A 251, Abingdon Vale 181, Long Eaton 167, Worcester 167, Halesowen 158, Leicester Sharks 119.

SENIOR swimmers from Halesowen Swimming Club travelled to Worcester at the weekend for the second round of the West Midlands National League.

The premier league lived up to its name with league leaders Boldmere dominate.

The chase for second spot with a coveted place in the league final was close with Halesowen and four other contenders involved in a tight battle all evening.

At the halfway mark eight points separated the four chasing teams but the gap grew steadily with Halesowen slipping behind.

Despite some battling performances and a thrilling final men's relay with Halesowen almost tipping out some the region's finest swimmers, the teams had to settle for fifth spot.

Individual wins were hard to come but Chloe Finch in the butterfly and freestyle and Richard Spoor in the individual medley and breaststroke were double winners.

The open men's relay team were unbeatable in the medley, including Josh Bradley, Jacob Darby and Michael Edmunds, who were joined by Zach Collins and Mark Laing in the final freestyle relay to be touched out by just 0.3 seconds.

Convincing Connor into semi-finals

CONNOR JONES progressed to the semi-finals of the National Amateur Boxing Championships with a convincing victory.

The former schoolboys and junior ABA national amateur champion, from Lions ABC, Dudley, was a majority points winner in the quarter-finals at Mansfield Civic Centre.

Jones was up against an Irish adversary in Callum McConnell, from Barton ABC. The two went toe-to-toe at 60kg in Class B, for boxers born in 1996.

He nearly forced the stoppage in the second of three, two minute rounds, the jab setting up a right uppercut that rocked McConnell onto his toes.

Four judges to one ruled in Jones' favour on points.

Winning machine rolls on for the Yeltz Ladies

Gillway Ladies 0 Halesowen Ladies 8

THE Yeltz winning machine travelled to Tamworth in the open cup to face new side Gillway ladies at the weekend.

Halesowen are the leading goal scorers in the County League were expecting to dominate the home side.

The visitors didn't take long to realise their expectations as girl of the game Tracey Haycock put through in form striker Haley Chatwin to score with a low drive on eight minutes.

Halesowen were dominating the game from the start and passed the ball well through the squad.

Katie Moore made it two with an in-swinging corner that curved into the goal with the goalkeeper unable to do anything other than stand and watch the events unfold.

Chatwin then made it three on 20 minutes with fantastic work by Sophie Richards and within a minute Sian Whithall increased the lead with a half-volley again from excellent work by Richards.

Goal of the game came from super kid Moore who with an individual effort took on the defence and with a looping shot got it over the keeper and into the back of the net.

Whithall got her brace again with good support from hard-working Richards.

Leading goal scorer Rachel Letford added to her tally after a cool finish with a one-on-one with the keeper.

Half time came for a relief for the home side but the

Football

damage was already done.

In the second half the home side consolidated their defensive players and were aiming for damage limitation and made it much harder for the Halesowen squad.

The Yeltz defence became bystanders so they were brought forward which worked well as defender Shell Thomas scored the final goal.

She got the ball outside the penalty area and with another looping shot finished the rout off. Halesowen hit the bar on several occasions but the fantastic effort in the first half put the game out of sight for the home side.

Halesowen Manager Scott McKee said the first half was fantastic and we played the ball around the pitch with great authority, the quality of the Halesowen side was far better than the home side and from the off there was only going to be one winner. This week Halesowen face Redditch away in the county cup



Katie Moore of Yeltz Ladies who was among the goalscorers in the shutout against Gillway Ladies

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Yeltz Ladies win
streak goes on
Page 39



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e-mail: chronsport@expressandstar.co.uk

Victory is sweet for enthused Old Hales

Bournville 3 Old Hales 20
OLD Hales and their enthusiastic supporters travelled to Bournville in positive mood.

Constant driving pressure from both forwards and backs saw the home side defending for most of the 40 minutes. Pressure told with a penalty to Chris Hooper opening the scoring.

Hales deserved more with continual dominance but Bournville managed to claw back a penalty to draw level. Scrum half Nathan Jones was instrumental and provided constant ball to the Hales backs. One feed to wing Luke Smith saw him kick and chase to score in the corner, converted by Hooper.

Bournville were penalised again under pressure. Hooper converted. On 70 minutes the home side resorted to usual tactics when prop Coles punched Mark Evans several times while he was pinned down in a ruck. He received a red card.

The Hales defence was excellent with centres, the Robinson brothers, marshalling their opposite numbers well and wing Joe Oxford regularly breaching the home defence.

For Hales Pete Fitzgerald was again at the forefront of the drive to the line for a brilliant try which was converted by Hooper and was the final score.

Hales put in strong show

Old Hales 2nds 53 Worcester Warriors 12
OLD Hales returned to winning ways with a strong performance by the forwards and superior back play orchestrated by Chris Harris.

Mike Topping opened the scoring after Hales pack drove Worcester over their own line, with Tom Harris converting to make it 7-0.

Hales forwards continued to dominate and following a forward drive Sam Jones touched down to score a fine try. Unfortunately the lost their inspirational leader Neil Western in this move, John Harris taking over as skipper.

OHRFC Under-17s travelled to Coventry for a match with Coventrians excellent tries scored by up-and-coming colts Bill Harris and Ewan Lawless. Lawless was named man of the match. Final score 15-15.

Defeat on the road without hot-shot Haseley

Newcastle 2 Yeltz 1

HALESOWEN began their brief spell without top scorer Ben Haseley and it showed as they slumped to a 2-1 defeat to mid-table side Newcastle Town.

The first chance of the game came from Newcastle as Aaron Carter reacted quickly in the Yeltz box and hit a shot that Matt Sargeant managed to get his palm to the ball to deny Newcastle and the ball bounced out of the area and back into the field of play.

Newcastle showed their good form as they kept pressing for the advantage as James Askey cut into the Yeltz box and he hit a shot that just went over the bar. Halesowen had

Football

a goal disallowed. Iyseden Christie kept fighting to get down the right wing and he finally did and hit the ball across the box, but Tom Tonks pushed Aaron Carter who fell and flicked the ball over his own keeper and the goal was wiped out.

The first half came to an end, and it seemed a dull half with both sides having a fair amount of chances but both sides were struggling to hit target.

The second half started with Newcastle taking the lead as a corner kick from Ricky

Bridge flew into the box and it met with the head of Leon Ashman and flew into the net.

Halesowen were then gifted an equaliser as Ashman headed the ball with little power towards his own keeper and Christie was able to hit it past Dave Parton and the ball rolled slowly into the bottom right hand corner of the net.

Halesowen seemed to have woken up after that goal as Tonks managed to find space inside the Newcastle box, but his shot lacked power and the ball rolled into the hands of Parton.

Newcastle didn't need long to get back into the lead as Tim Sanders slotted a

through-ball to Tom Urwin, who outpaced Curtis Tilt and poked the ball past Sergeant and the ball rolled into the net.

Halesowen came close to snatching a point in the final moments of the game.

Kristian Green found space in the Newcastle penalty area and he hit the ball towards goal, but it flew over the bar and that ended the game for Halesowen as the referee ended the game.

Halesowen are still in third place after the defeat but they are now level on points with Carlton Town, so a win is needed against basement side Bedworth in order to keep the position they are in.

Scott will be aiming for goals

SCOTT GOLBOURNE has said how he hopes to become Wolves' goals weapon.

The attacking left-back netted his second strike for the club in Saturday's 1-1 draw at former club Oldham in the FA Cup first round with a powerful header from James Henry's cross.

It was only the ninth goal of the 25-year-old's career in 254 appearances.

But with head coach Kenny Jackett urging the full-backs to attack at every opportunity, Golbourne believes there is scope to become Wolves' best scorer from full-back in a season since Andy Thompson, who was co-commentating on the tie and netted 45 in 451 games for the club – mostly penalties – and 50 in his career.

"I've been told three to five goals a season from full-back is creditable so I've probably got a target of five for the season," said Golbourne.

"I'd be happy with that along with a good handful of assists as well. To score 50 like Andy Thompson is a tall order – that's a good ratio for a striker for one club!"

"I'm chipping away at it – that's 45 to go and we'll see how it goes."

Myhill pulls out of Wales squad

ALBION keeper Boaz Myhill has withdrawn from the Wales squad as he revealed he battled through injuries to line up for the Baggies at Chelsea.

The former Hull man will miss the friendly against Finland in Cardiff on Friday.

The 31-year-old is struggling with an Achilles problem and damaged ligaments in his thumb.

The Chronicle, a Midland News Association Ltd publication, printed by the company at Ketterley, Telford, Thursday, November 14, 2013.

PENALTIES SEE THE YELTZ CRASH IN CUP

Yeltz 1 Kidsgrove 1 (5-4 after penalties)

HALESOWEN crashed out at the first hurdle of the Dods Sport Cup to basement side Kidsgrove.

The first chance of the game came 15 minutes in, and was from Kidsgrove as a dangerous cross came to Matt Haddrell, who headed the ball at goal from point blank range, but he only got part of his head to the ball, and it just went wide.

Halesowen then had a chance as youngster Danny Waldron managed to chest the ball down and he hit a shot which too went wide.

The Yeltz kick-started the second half with a goal, as a great curling cross from Adam Meacham flew into the box.

John Hill was in the right place at the right time to head the ball into the net to claim his first senior goal on his full debut for the Yeltz.

Bang

Adam Meacham was playing his last game in a Yeltz shirt and he wanted to go out with a bang as he skipped past two Kidsgrove players before he hit the ball towards goal but it wasn't to be.

Halesowen's lead lasted all of 10 minutes, as Ryan Smith was given way too much space and he was able to easily slot the ball into the net.

Yeltz' night went into more turmoil after 65 minutes as Elliott Turner went into a lunging challenge in an attempt to get the ball from Ryan Smith and collided with him. Turner was red carded and it was now anyone's game.

The depleted home side were starting to get more

Football

chances at goals as Kristian Green took a shot that flew out of the stadium and Matt Martin did the same two minutes later.

Kidsgrove nearly claimed the game late on as Tom Wakefield was given space in the Yeltz box his shot was on target, but Pearson reacted well and caught it.

The last chance of the game came from Halesowen as a corner kick from Griffiths flew towards the back post.

Matt Martin headed the ball towards goal and it bounced towards the target before it was acrobatically cleared by Chris Smith.

The game ended and it went straight into penalties as the two sides battled for a place in the second round.

The first penalty for Halesowen decided their fate, as Brendan Kelly concentrated more on placement and his curling penalty was palmed away by Read.

Yeltz scored their final four penalties, and so did Kidsgrove whose Darren Twigg finally ended the tie as he blasted the ball past the outstretching Pearson.

Halesowen have crashed out of the first stage of a cup for the third time this season.

Top of the world as fighters return as champions



Fighters from Charlesworth Martial Arts Club who have returned from the continent with a haul of medals

FIGHTERS from a Halesowen martial arts club have returned from a world championship with a haul of medals and titles, including the World Team Championships Title.

Charlesworth Martial Arts Club (MCA) had entrants in the Unified World Championships in Tuscany, Italy.

Jason Charlesworth's fighters represented the International Combat Organisation at the first-ever gathering where six world associations were unified.

Jason is head coach of the England and GB squad and he took seven of his

fighters to compete against some of the world's best. The championship attracted more than 10,000 competitors.

His team face a week of hard kick-boxing competition but his members fought through to the finals, winning 14 golds in points fighting, light contact fighting and team fighting.

Hard

"Each and every one who competed did their country proud let alone their club," said 6th Dan instructor Jason.

They had all trained hard all year round, with some very vigorous work-

outs and competitions over the year which was rewarded with the championships title. The winning fighters were: World Champions; Reuben Charlesworth four golds; Tyler Cox three golds; Holly O'Connor two golds; Aaron Crawley one gold, one bronze; Kieran Cox two gold, one silver; Weston Bogle one gold, two silver; Calum Pearson one gold, one silver.

Jason thanked the fighters and their parents for their efforts and hard work. CMA is looking for new students and anyone wanting to train should call him on 07889627929.

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